

THE  
**GREEDY**  
BOOK

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
CULT OF THE CHAFING DISH



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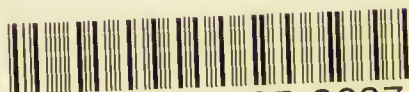


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THE GREEDY BOOK



“How admirable and beautiful are eating and drinking, and what a great invention the human digestive system is! How much better to be a man than an alligator! The alligator can fast for a year and a half, whereas five hours’ abstinence will set an edge on the most pampered human appetite. Nature has advanced a little since Mesozoic times. I feel certain that there are whole South Seas of discovery yet to be made in the art and science of eating and drinking.”

JOHN DAVIDSON





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LES SENS : PAR BERTALL

[Frontispiece

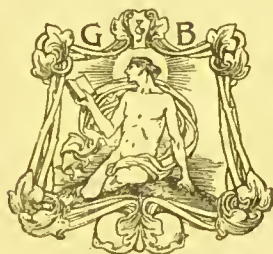


# THE GREEDY BOOK

A GASTRONOMICAL ANTHOLOGY

BY  
FRANK SCHLOESSER

AUTHOR OF  
"THE CULT OF THE CHAFING DISH"



LONDON  
GAY AND BIRD

12 & 13 HENRIETTA STREET, STRAND

1906

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S.15095.



*To*

THE IDEAL WAITER

*They also serve who only stand and wait*

Milton's Sonnet "On his Blindness"



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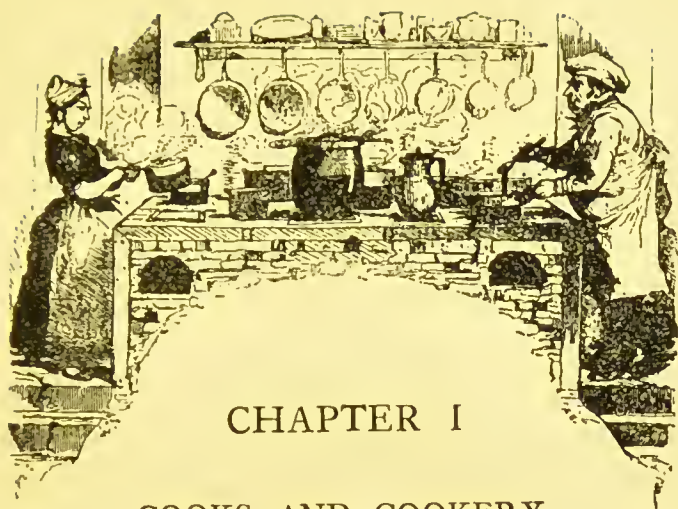
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## CHAPTER I

### COOKS AND COOKERY

“In short the world is but a Ragou, or a large dish of Varieties, prepared by inevitable Fate to treat and regale Death with.”

‘Miscellanies : or a Variety of Notion and Thought.’

By H. W. (Gent.) [Henry Waring] 1708.

THE only thing that can be said against eating is that it takes away one's appetite. True, there is a French proverb to the contrary, but that really only applies to the *hors d'œuvre* and the soup. We all eat three meals a day, some four, and a few even five, if one may reckon afternoon tea as a meal. Yet the art of eating—that is to say, how to eat, what to eat, and when



to eat it—is studiously neglected by those who deem they have souls superior to the daily stoking of the human engine.

Whosoever simply wants to eat certainly does not require to know how to cook. But whosoever desires to criticize a dinner and the dishes that compose it—and enjoyment without judgment is unsatisfactory—need not be a cook, but must understand what cooking implies; he must have grasped the spirit of the art of cookery.

Cooks themselves almost always judge a dinner too partially, and from the wrong point of view; they are, almost without exception, obstinately of the opinion that everything they cook must taste equally good to everybody. This is obviously absurd (but so like a cook), for allowance must be made for the personal equation. Nothing tastes so good as what one eats oneself, so it is not to be expected that one and the same dish will please even the most fastidious octette. Still there have been occasional instances.

The late Sir Henry Thompson once had a new cook, and, in an interview with her



after the first dinner-party, she expressed herself as being delighted that everything had been so satisfactory. "But how do you know it was?" asked Sir Henry. "I've not given you my opinion yet." "No, Sir Henry," said the cook, "but I know it was all right, because none of the salt-cellars were touched."

It is a mistaken idea that a man-cook can be a *cordons-bleu*. That title of high distinction is reserved for the feminine sex. According to Lady Morgan (Sidney Owenson, 1841), in her "Book without a Name," a *cordons-bleu* is defined as an honorary distinction conferred on the first class of female cooks in Paris, either in allusion to their blue aprons, or to the order whose blue ribbon was so long considered as the adequate recompense of all the highest merit in the highest classes.

The Fermier Général who built the palace of the Elysée became not more celebrated for his exquisite dinners than for the moral courage with which he attributed their excellence to his female cook, Marie, when such a chef was hardly known in



a French kitchen ; for when Marie served up *un petit diner délirant* she was called for like other *prime donne*, and her health drunk by the style of *Le Cordon Bleu*.

One of the most famous of the bearers of the title was undoubtedly that wonderful Sophie who is so charmingly described in *La Salle-à-manger du Docteur Véron*. She was cook and politician too, and even Alexandre Dumas père did not disdain to dine with her at a dinner of her own cooking ; and moreover eminent statesmen of the period consulted her about politics, her clear-headed simplicity and wide experience of popular sentiment rendering her opinions of considerable value. The editor adds that her name was not *Sophie*, but that her many friends will nevertheless easily recognize her.

The value of a good chef in a well-ordered household cannot be over-estimated. His tact, his experience, and his art go far to make life pleasant and easy. Moreover, a good cook is a direct aid to good health, for he uses none but the best materials, and, if he be of the highest rank of his



order, knows just how to assimilate those suave and subtle suggestions and flavourings which go so far to make cookery such as the great Careme (1828) called *le genre mâle et élégant*. Cooks were held in the highest estimation in Venice in the sixteenth century. Here is the beginning of a letter from one Alessandro Vacchi, a Venetian citizen, to an acquaintance of his, a cook and carver by profession: "*Al magnifico Signor Padron mio osservandissimo il Signor Matteo Barbini, Cuóco e Scalco celeberrimo della città di Venetia.*" In our own time honour to the profession is not lacking, for a little while ago the King decorated M. Ménager, his *maître-chef*, with the Royal Victorian Medal.

At the same time the competition of many rich folk for the services of some of the best-known chefs has made these artists, in some cases at least, place an extortionate value upon their ministrations. A very clever chef, reliable in everything except his sauces, in which he is slightly heterodox, was recently engaged by a *nouveau riche* at a salary far exceeding that which he paid to his private secretary.



In one of Matthew Bramble's letters from Bath ("Humphry Clinker") he refers to such a one as "a mushroom of opulence, who pays a cook seventy guineas a week for furnishing him with one meal a day." Mushroom of opulence is good. That species of fungus is always with us. Dr. Kitchiner in his "Housekeeper's Oracle" (1829) quotes from "The Plebeian Polished, or Rules for Persons who have unaccountably plunged themselves into Wealth." A work of this nature, if published nowadays, should surely command a large sale, for the number of people who have "unaccountably plunged themselves into Wealth" seems to be multiplying rapidly. Most of them know how to feed. Few of them seem to have mastered the mystery of how to dine. "Man ist wass man isst" says the German proverb, and there is no valid reason for spending fabulous sums on a dinner of out-of-the-season delicacies, when the good reasonable and seasonable things of this earth are ready and ripe for consumption.

At the same time, meanness has nothing



to recommend it. There is no credit in starving yourself or your guests. The difference between mere parsimony and economy has never been more deftly illustrated than in those pregnant sentences from Edmund Burke: "Mere parsimony is not economy. Expense, and great expense, may be an essential article in home economy. Economy is a distributive virtue, and consists, not in saving, but selection. Parsimony requires no providence, no sagacity, no powers of combination, no comparison, no judgment. Mere instinct, and that not an instinct of the noblest kind, may produce this false economy in perfection."

This is very solid wisdom, because it bears in mind the great element of perspective in expense, which is so often forgotten or overlooked.

To revert to the preciousness and rarity of the really good female cook, to the artist in pots and pans. It was in 1833 that the Prince de Ligne, who had just lost his second wife, came to Paris to seek consolation. He lived temporarily in the Rue



Richelieu. One evening in passing the lodge he became aware of a peculiarly alluring odour of cooking. He saw the concierge, an old woman of sixty, bending eagerly over a battered stewpan on a small charcoal fire, stirring some mess which evidently was exhaling this delicious odour. The Prince was one of the affable kind. He asked the poor old lady for a taste of her dish, which he liked so much that he gave her a double louis, and asked her how it happened that with such eminent culinary genius she was reduced to the porter's lodge. She told him that she had once been head cook to a cardinal-archbishop. She had married a bad man who had spent all her savings. Although very poor, she added with conscious pride, and no longer disposing of the full *batterie* of an archiepiscopal kitchen, she flattered herself she could manage with a few bits of charcoal and a *méchante casserole* to cook with the best of them. Next day the lodge was vacant, the old concierge being on her way to Belœil, the Prince de Ligne's residence, near Mons, in Belgium, where she presided for fifteen



years over one of the best-appointed kitchens in the world.

Less fortunate than the Prince de Ligne was a middle-aged bachelor in Paris, a few years ago, who gave away an odd lottery ticket to his cook, a worthy and unprepossessing spinster. Shortly afterwards, to his amazement, he saw that this particular ticket had drawn the *gros lot*. He could not afford to part with such a valuable and valued servant, so he proposed marriage, was accepted, and duly became one with his cook before the *maire* with as little delay as possible. Directly after the marriage he asked his wife for the lottery ticket. "Oh, I gave that away," she said, "to Jean, the coachman, to compensate him for our broken engagement."

It has been the ambition of many highly placed men to become cooks. According to Miss Hill's interesting book on Juniper Hall, and its colony of refugees, M. de Jaucourt is recorded to have said: "It seems to me that I have something of a vocation for cookery. I will take up that business. Do you know what our cook



said to me this morning? He had been consulting me respecting his risking the danger of a return to France. 'But you know, monsieur,' he said, 'an exception is made in favour of all artists.' 'Very well then,' concluded M. de Jaucourt, '*I will be an artist-cook also.*'"

A notable instance of the chef who took a pride in his art and could not understand any one referring to him as "a mere cook" is the delightful hero of Mr. H. G. Wells's story of "A Misunderstood Artist" in his "Select Conversations with an Uncle." "They are always trying to pull me to earth. 'Is it wholesome?' they say; —'Nutritious?' I say to them: 'I do not know. I am an artist. I do not care. It is beautiful.'—'You rhyme?' said the Poet. 'No. My work is—more plastic. I cook.'"

There was a famous cook too, Laurens by name, who was chef for a long time to George III, and who combined with his culinary skill a wonderful *flair* for objects of art, so that the King bought a large number of the beautiful things which are even now



at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle on the advice of this same Laurens. It has been said of him that he rarely made a mistake in buying, and that he attended the principal picture and art sales on the Continent on behalf of his royal master.

Some cheerful noodles have had much to say anent the want of imagination of the modern chef. This is the most arrant blatherumskite. The chef, who is only, after all, a superior servant, paid (and well, too) to carry out the gastronomic ideas of his master, or, if he lack such ideas, to pander to his ignorance, too frequently arrogates to himself a culinary wisdom which is not justified by results. The chef need only be a thoroughly good cook. The ideas, the suggestions, the genius behind the pots and pans, come from the gastronomic student. Neither Brillat-Savarin nor Grimod de la Reynière was a cook—nor was Thomas Walker, G. A. Sala, or E. S. Dallas, but they were all notable authorities. And they inspired the culinary art of their times by their knowledge, invention, and discrimination.



As a matter of fact, our chefs are unimaginative—and a good job too; because when a chef, be he never so clever, begins to launch out on novelties of his own invention, he almost invariably comes to grief. A really good *maître d'hôtel* may occasionally suggest a new dish, but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is merely a slight variation of something perfectly well known and appreciated. There may be a new garnishing, a trifling alteration in the manner of serving, and there is invariably a brand-new (and usually inappropriate) name, but the dish remains practically the same, despite its new christening-robe.

A fine joint of Southdown mutton has been recently renamed *Bébague*, but it remains sheep, and nothing is gained by the alteration save a further insight into the ignorance of the average chef. This is only a simple example, but it might be multiplied indefinitely. I have been served at a well-known restaurant with cutlets *à la Trianon*, which turned out to be our old and tried friend cutlets *à la Réforme* under



a new title. In a like manner, but at another restaurant, an ordinary and excellent *mousse de jambon* paraded as *jambon à la Véfour*; Heavens and the chef only know why; and the one won't tell, and the other doesn't know.

*Béhague*, by the way, is, so to say, chefs' French, which has much in common with dog Latin, if one may be allowed the comparison. *Béhague* will not be found in a French dictionary, but it is the new *nom de cuisine* for fine-quality mutton (such as Southdown); it has only lately come into use, and there seems no particular reason for it. Probably it was invented in "a moment of enthusiasm," as the barber-artist remarked when he made a wig that just fitted a hazel-nut.

There are several different kinds of bad language. That used by chefs and *maîtres d'hôtel* on their menus is one of the worst. They are incorrigibly ignorant—and glory in it. It is an undeniable fact that the average menu, whether at a club or restaurant, contains usually at least a brace of orthographic howlers, while at the private house,



an it boast a chef who writes the dinner programmes, the average is distinctly higher. I have encountered on an otherwise quite reputable card the extraordinary item *Soufflet de fromage*. The kind hostess had no intention of inflicting a box on the ears to the cheese, but had mistaken *soufflet* for *soufflé*. By such obvious errors are social friendships imperilled.

But I should like to go much further than this comparatively harmless example. No less an authority than Æneas Dallas in Kettner's "Book of the Table" says: "It is a simple fact, of which I undertake to produce overwhelming evidence, that the language of the kitchen is a language 'not understood of the people.' There are scores upon scores of its terms in daily use which are little understood and not at all fixed, and there is not upon the face of this earth an occupation which is carried on with so much of unintelligible jargon and chattering of apes as that of preparing food. Not only cooks, but also the most learned men in France have given up a great part of the language of the kitchen as beyond



all comprehension. We sorely want Cadmus amongst the cooks. All the world remembers that he taught the Greeks their alphabet. It is well-nigh forgotten that he was cook to the King of Sidon. I cannot help thinking that cooks would do well to combine with their cookery, like Cadmus, a little attention to the alphabet."

It is easy, of course, to ridicule such obvious ineptitudes as a dish of "breeches in the Royal fashion with velvet sauce" (*Culotte à la Royale sauce velouté*) or "capons' wings in the sun" (*ailes de poularde au soleil*), but these are but trifling offences compared to the egregious lapses of grammar, history, and good taste which disfigure our menus. There is no culinary merit in describing an otherwise harmless dish of salmon as *saumon Liberté au Triomphe d'Amour*. It is simply gross and vulgar affectation. Let the cooks do their cooking properly and all will be well. Their weirdly esoteric naming of edible food is an insult of supererogation to the intelligence of the diner.

At the same time, due credit must be given to the chef for the part he has played



in the general improvement of gastronomics and the art of feeding during the past two decades. The mere multiplication of restaurants is nothing; but the general improvement of the average menu is everything. Here, for instance, is the menu of a dinner of the year 1876, recommended by no less an authority than the late *Fin Bec*, Blanchard Jerrold, whose *Epicure's Year Books*, *Cupboard Papers*, and *Book of Menus* are by way of being classics.

## MENU.

Crécy aux Croûtons.

Printannier.

Saumon bouilli, sauce homard.

Filets de soles à la Joinville.

Whitebait.

Suprême de Volaille à l'écarlate.

Côtelettes d'Agneau aux concombres.

Cailles en aspic.

Selle de Mouton.

Bacon and beans.

Caneton.

Baba au Rhum.

Pouding glacé.

This was the dinner given by the late



Edmund Yates on the occasion of the publication of the *World* newspaper. Observe its heaviness, clumsiness, and want of delicacy. Three fish dishes are ostentatious and redundant; three entrées simply kill one another; the quails are misplaced before the saddle; the bacon and beans is, of course, a joke. Altogether it is what we should call to-day a somewhat barbarian meal. Contrast therewith the following artistically fashioned programme of a dinner given by the Réunion des Gastronomes; it is practically *le dernier mot* of the culinary art.

## MENU.

Huîtres Royales Natives.

Tortue Claire.

Filets de Soles des Gastronomes.

Suprême de Poularde Trianon.

Noisettes d'Agneau à la Carême.

Pommes Nouvelles Suzette.

Sorbets à la Palermitaine.

Bécassines à la Broche.

Salade.

Haricots Verts Nouveaux à la Crème.

Biscuit Glacé Mireille.

Corbeille de Friandises.

Dessert.



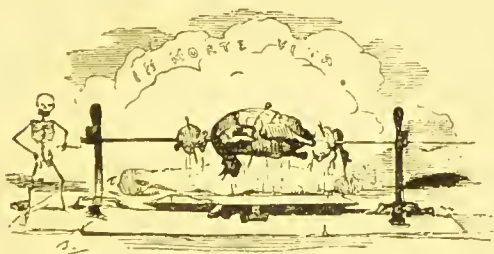
Nothing could be lighter or more graceful. There is naught that is over-elaborate or indigestible ; on the contrary, the various flavours are carefully preserved, and there is a subtle completeness about the whole dinner which is very pleasing.

It was the late lamented Joseph, of the *Tour d'Argent*, the Savoy, and elsewhere, who once said : " Make the good things as plain as possible. God gave a special flavour to everything. Respect it. Do not destroy it by messing."

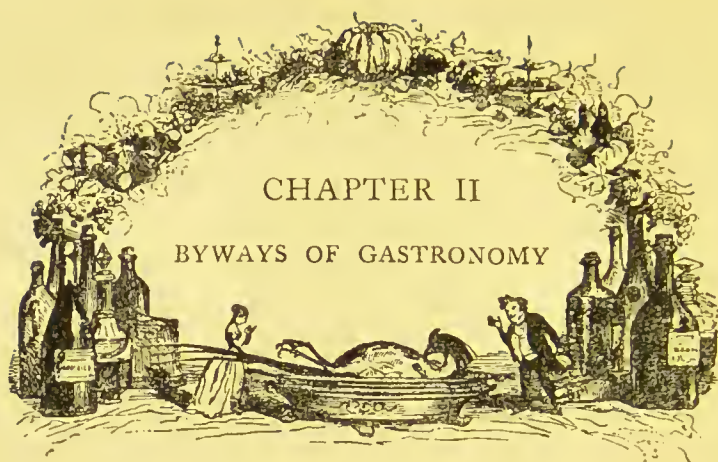
Joseph, who, by the way, was born in Birmingham, was a *mâitre d'hôtel* of genius, though even he had his little weaknesses, and merely to watch the play of his wrists whilst he was " fatiguing " a salad for an especially favoured guest was a lesson in inspired enthusiasm. His rebuke to a rich American in Paris is historic. The man of dollars had ordered an elaborate *déjeuner*, and whilst toying with the *hors-d'œuvre* carefully tucked his serviette into his collar and spread it over his waistcoat, as is the way with some careless feeders. Joseph, rightly enough, resented this want of



manners, and, approaching the guest, said to him politely, "Monsieur, I understand, wished to have *déjeuner*, not to be shaved." The restaurant lost that American's custom, but gained that of a host of nice and delicate feeders.







“La Cuisine n’est pas un métier, c’est un art, et c’est toujours une bonne fortune que la conversation d’un cuisinier : mieux vaut causer avec un cuisinier qu’avec un pharmacien. S’il n’y avait que de bons cuisiniers, les pharmaciens auraient peu de choses à faire, les médecins disparaîtraient ; on ne garderait que les chirurgiens pour les fractures.”—NESTOR ROQUEPLAN.

I AM going to be very rude. Not one woman in a hundred can order a dinner at a restaurant. I’ve tried them, and I know. Not only can she not order a dinner with taste, discretion, and due appreciation of season, surroundings, and occasion ; but she inevitably shows her character, or want of it, if she be allowed to choose the menu. The eternal feminine peeps out in the soup,



lurks designedly in the entrées, and comes into the full glare of the electric light in the sweets and liqueurs.

Let me explain. As a bachelor who is lucky enough to be asked out to many dinner parties, I have cultivated a slight reciprocative hospitality in the shape of asking my hostesses (and their daughters, if they have any) to dine with me at sundry restaurants. It is my habit to beg my guests to order the dinner, "because a woman knows so much more about these things than a mere man"; and all unwittingly the dear ladies invariably fall into the innocent little trap, wrinkle up their foreheads and study the carte, while I sit tight and study character.

Luckily my digestion is excellent. I have survived several seasons of this sort of thing, but I feel that the time is coming when I must really give it up and order the dinners myself.

The wife of a very important lawyer was good enough to dine with me at the Savoy recently. She is, I believe, a thoroughly good wife and mother, and, moreover, she



has a happy knack of humorous small talk. She graciously agreed to order our dinner—after the usual formula. The *crème santé* was all right—homely and healthy, if a trifle dull and uninteresting; but when we went on to boiled sole, mutton cutlets, and a rice pudding, I felt that the sweet simplicity of the Jane Austen cuisine was too much with us, and I recognized sadly that she was not imbued with the spirit of place; she mistook the Savoy for the schoolroom. Her forte was evidently decorous domesticity. Nevertheless, I had a good dinner.

Less fortunate was I in my experience with the eldest daughter of a celebrated painter. She was all for colour. “There is not enough colour in our drab London life,” she said; so, at the Carlton, she ordered Bortsch, because it was so pretty and pink; fish à la Cardinal, because of the tomatoes; cutlets à la Réforme, because she liked the many-coloured “baby-ribbons” of garnishing; spinach and poached eggs—“the contrast of colour is so daring, you know”; beetroot salad; a peach à la



Melba—"so artistic and musical"; and, of course, crème de menthe to accompany the coffee. It was a feast—of colour—and the food was thoroughly well cooked; but I was reminded of Thackeray's chef, M. Mirabolant, who conceived a white dinner for Blanche Amory to typify her virginal soul.

Then there was an amiable and affected widow, whose mitigated woe and black voile frock were most becoming. She presumed, however, on her widowhood to order everything *en demi-deuil*, which meant that every dish from fish to bird was decorated with mourning bands of truffles. The thoughtful chef sent up the ice in the form of a headstone, and we refrained from Turkish coffee because French *café noir* was so much blacker.

The great Brillat-Savarin, speaking of female gourmets, said, "They are plump and pretty rather than handsome, with a tendency to embonpoint." I confess that my experience leads me to disagree; the real female gourmet (alas, that she should be so rare!), broad-minded, unprejudiced,



and knowledgeable, is handsome rather than pretty, thin rather than stout, and silent rather than talkative. This, however, by the way.

Two schoolgirls did me the honour of dining with me at Prince's not long ago, before going to the play. I gave them carte blanche to order what they liked, and this was the extraordinary result :—

Langouste en aspic.

Meringues Chantilly.

Consommé à la neige de Florence.

Selle de Chevreuil.

Gelée Macédoine.

Faisan en plumage.

Bombe en surprise.

Nid de Pommes Dauphine.

I ventured to suggest that there was a certain amount of fine confused feeding about this programme, that it was so heavy that even two hungry schoolgirls and a middle-aged bachelor might find it difficult to tackle, also that the sequence of dishes was not quite conventional. Eventually they blushing explained that they had ordered all these things because they did



not know what any of them meant, and they wanted to find out—"besides, they've got such pretty names, and it will help us so much in our French lessons." I reduced the formidable dimensions of the dinner, and there were no disastrous results.

I once had the temerity to invite a real lady journalist to dine with me at the Berkeley. I think that she writes as Aunt Sophonisba, or something of the sort, and her speciality is the soothing of fluttering hearts and the explaining of the niceties of suburban etiquette. Anyhow, she knows nothing about cookery, although I understand she conducts a weekly column entitled "Dainty Dishes for Delicate Digestions." It was in July, and she said we might begin with oysters and then have a partridge. When I explained that owing to official carelessness these cates happened to be out of season, she waxed indignant and said that she thought "they were what the French call *primeurs*." Nevertheless, she made a remarkably good hot-weather dinner, eating right through the menu, from the melon *réfraichie* to the *petits fours*. Women



who golf, lady journalists, and widows, I observe, have usually remarkably good appetites.

I recollect also an American actress who sang coon songs—and yearned for culture. We lunched at the Cecil, and when she espied on the card eggs à la Meyerbeer, she instantly demanded them because “he was a composer way back about the year dot, and I just love his music to ‘Carmen.’” She hunted through the menu for celebrated names, preferably historical, and ordered successively *Sole à la Colbert*, *Poulet Henri Quatre*, and Nesselrode pudding, because they reminded her of the time when she was studying French history.

With the keenest desire not to be thought disrespectful or ungallant, I really believe that, however well a woman may manage her household, her cook, her husband, and her kitchen expenses, she cannot order a dinner at a restaurant. Whether it be the plethora of choice, or the excitement of the lights and music, or awe of the *maître d’hôtel* and the *sommelier*, I do not know, but I am sure that the good hostess who



gives you a very eatable little dinner at her own house will make hash of the best restaurant *carte du jour* in her endeavours to order what she thinks is nice and appropriate.

In referring just now to the excellent Miss Jane Austen, I am reminded that eating and drinking play no small part in her delightful novels. Who does not remember Mrs. Bennet, who dared not invite Bingley to an important dinner, "for although she always kept a good table, she did not think anything less than two courses could be good enough for a man on whom she had such anxious designs, or satisfy the appetite and pride of one who had ten thousand a year." The dinner eventually served consisted of soup, venison, partridges, and an unnamed pudding. And a very good meal too !

An American critic is of opinion that there is a surfeit of mutton in English literature. "It is boiled mutton usually, too." Now boiled mutton is, to the critic, a poor sort of dish, unsuggestive, boldly and flagrantly nourishing, a most British



thing, which "will never gain a foothold on the American stomach." This last is a vile phrase, even for an American critic, and suggests a wrestling match. The critic goes on: "The Austenite must e'en eat it. Roast mutton is a different thing. You might know Emma Woodhouse would have roast mutton rather than boiled; it is to roast mutton and rice pudding that the little Kneightleys go scampering home through the wintry weather."

From Miss Austen to Mrs. Gaskell is no such very far cry. "We had pudding before meat in my day," says Mr. Holbrook, the old-fashioned bachelor-yeoman in "Cranford." "When I was a young man we used to keep strictly to my father's rule: 'No broth, no ball; no ball, no beef.' We always began dinner with both, then came the suet puddings boiled in the broth with the beef; and then the meat itself. If we did not sup our broth, we had no ball, which we liked a deal better, and the beef came last of all. Now folks begin with sweet things, and turn their dinners topsy-turvy."



What would such a one have said to our modern dinners, at home, or at a restaurant ; a place which he probably would not comprehend at all, for, at any rate with us, the fashion of dining in public, especially with our women-folk, is a very recent innovation. The hearty individual of Mr. Holbrook's time and type would have more sympathy with the frugalities of the La Manchán gentleman Cervantes drew, with his lean horse and running greyhound, courageous ferret, and meals of "duelos y quebrantes," that strange dish, which Mr. Cunninghame Graham tells us "perplexed every translator of the immortal work."

The modern restaurant is, I suppose, part and parcel of the evolutionary trend of the times. It has its advantages and its drawbacks. Its influence on public manners or manners in public (which are not altogether the same thing), are not entirely salutary. He was a wise person who once said, "Vulgarity, after all, is only the behaviour of others." Go into any frequented restaurant at dinner-time, watch the men and women (especially the latter), how they eat,



talk, and observe their neighbours—*et vous m'en direz des nouvelles!* Our forbears, although, or perhaps because, they dined out less, or not at all, had a certain reticence of table manner which has been lost in succeeding generations. Be good enough to note the reception of a party of guests entering a full restaurant and making their way to their reserved table. Notice how every feminine eye criticizes the new-comers. Not a bow, nor a frill, nor a sleeve, nor a jewel, nor a twist of chiffon is unobserved. Talk almost ceases whilst the progress through the already filled tables takes place. The men of the party ask polite questions, and endeavour to continue the even tenor of the conversation, but the feminine replies are vague and malapropos. No woman seems able to concentrate her attention on talk whilst other women are passing. She must act the critic; note, observe, copy, or deride. These are our table manners of to-day. Not entirely pretty, perhaps; but typical and noteworthy.

The multiplication of restaurants continues, and yet, come to think of it, the





LES ALIMENTS : PAR BERTALL

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actual places where one lunches, dines, or sups, the "legitimate" houses, so to say, can be numbered on the fingers of both hands—including the thumbs. All the others are more or less esoteric. One can, possibly, dine as well in Soho as in the Strand, but there is no *cachet* about the dinner, and one never meets any one one knows, or if one does, one wishes one hadn't.

Still, compared with our grandfathers' times, things have vastly altered. In the "Epicure's Almanack or Calendar of Good Living for 1815," there is a list of over one hundred eating-houses of sorts, but the only ones that survive to this day are Birch's of Cornhill; the "Blue Posts" in Cork Street; the "Cheshire Cheese," Fleet Street; the "Golden Cross," Charing Cross; Gunter's of Berkeley Square; Hatchett's in Piccadilly; the "Hummums" in Covent Garden; Long's in Bond Street (better known as "Jubber's"); the "Ship," Charing Cross; the London Tavern; and "Sweeting's Rents."

Speaking of the music at a very well-known restaurant in town, a morning paper



said recently : “ It is noticeable that many of the visitors occasionally stop talking and listen to the music.” This set me thinking. It is worth while listening to good music. Bad music we are better without. Good cooking and good conversation are natural concomitants, and mutually assist one another. *Ergo*, it seems obvious that good music and a good dinner are incompatible. It is rude to talk whilst musical artists are giving of their best for your delectation, and, at the same time, a dinner partaking of Wordsworth’s Peter Bell’s party in a parlour “ all silent and all damned ” is contrary to the best gastronomic traditions. Thus I think I have the musical diner in an *impasse*.

Speaking from memory, among the best dozen restaurants in London there is music in every one save three ; I am therefore bound to conclude that it is merely a question of supply and demand, and that I am in a minority. I overheard a quaint protest the other night at a restaurant where the music is particularly loud, blatant, and objectionable. A man and, presumably, his wife were dining together, and were



evidently anxious to keep up their conversation on some mutually interesting topic. During a lull in the clatter and noise I heard the woman's voice say, "I do wish they would play more quietly, one really cannot hear what one is eating."

Oh! the Roast Beef of Old England,  
And oh! the old English Roast Beef!

How many casual diners at the Carlton could hum or whistle that fine old air? Probably not one—not even M. Jacques. And yet it is about the only really appropriate and legitimate tune to which Britons ought to feed. What do we get instead? Musical-comedy selections, languorous waltzes, cornet solos, coon songs, and an occasional czardas. Is music really an aid to digestion, or is it designed, like the frills on the cutlets, to induce us to ignore the imported mutton in favour of the trimmings?

It is tolerably certain that music with dinner (at a restaurant, for the ordinary diner) was unknown in England before 1875. In the previous year the late George Augustus Sala, who knew most things worth



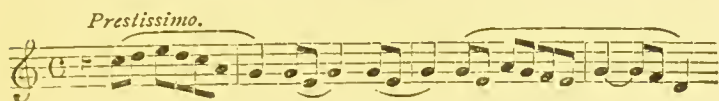
knowing—gastronomically—wrote an article in a monthly magazine on dinner music, and refers to it as existing only in royal palaces. Very soon afterwards, however, it was offered to anybody who could afford to pay a few shillings for a set dinner amid clean and appetizing surroundings. Subject to correction, it is fairly certain that the first place in London where they provided music at dinner was the Holborn Restaurant, which had been a swimming-bath, a dancing-casino, and other things. The example was speedily followed, and very soon bands sprang up like mushrooms right and left, at every restaurant which made any pretence of attracting the multitude.

The Criterion started glee-singers, although this was perhaps more directly an outcome of Herr Jongmanns' boys' choir at Evans' in Covent Garden.

Nearly every restaurant in London nowadays has a band, and go where you will, such spectacles are offered you as a man with music in his soul trying to take his hot soup in jig time, because the band is playing *prestissimo* forsooth, and getting very



red in the face whilst so doing. Then will follow the whitebait, and the band, just out



of pure cussedness, plays a languishing slow movement, whereupon the musical diner is obliged to eat his whitebait *andante*, and the dear little fish get quite cold in the process.



Over in Paris, Berlin, and on the Riviera it is even worse. The *restaurateurs* there encourage a wild, fierce race of hirsute ruffians called Tsiganes, who are supposed to be Hungarian gipsies: "A nation of geniuses, you know ; they can't read a note of music, and play only by ear !" That's just the trouble of it—because their ears are often all wrong. There is absolutely nothing less conducive to a good appetite than to watch these short-jacketed, be-frogged, Simian fiddlers playing away for dear life the Rakoczy March or a mal-treated Strauss waltz, and ogling à la Rigo



any foolish female who seems attracted by them. It is on record that an Englishman once approached the leader of such a band in a Paris restaurant and asked him the name of the dance he had just been playing. "Sure, an' I don't know, yer honour," was the reply, "but I'm thinking it's a jig." All the Hungarians do not come from Hungary.

Curiously enough, there is an old-time connexion between music and dinner, although not precisely as we understand either. In the great houses of the seventeenth century dinner was announced by a concert of trumpets and drums, or with blasts from a single horn, blown by the head huntsman. The music of huntsmen running in upon their quarry was the music which declared the venison and wild boar ready for the trenchers. Blown to announce the coming of dinner and supper, the horn was also wound to celebrate the virtue of particular dishes. The nobler creatures of the chase were seldom brought to table without notes from the trumpet. Musical honours were accorded to the peacock, the swan, the sturgeon, and



the turbot. The French used to say, "Cornez le diner," i.e. "Cornet the dinner"—hence we derive our corned beef.

But to return to our own times ; things have come to such a pass, musically speaking, that the suburbanest of suburban ladies shopping of an afternoon in Oxford Street cannot drink her cup of tea without a band in the basement. It is quite humorous to listen to a selection from "La Bohème" punctuated by "Ten three-farthings, my dear, and cheap at that," or "You must really tell Ethel to have a silk foundation" ; but women are such thoroughly musical beings that they seem to accommodate themselves to all sorts of incongruities.

The old gourmets, who knew how to dine, loved music in its right place and at the right time, but that was not at dinner. Rossini, the great composer, was one of them. He loved good cheer and he wrote wonderful music—but he never mixed the two. It is passing strange that various ways of cooking eggs have been called after various composers. Thus we have œufs à la Meyerbeer, à la Rossini, à la Wagner, even



à la Sullivan. Why music and eggs should be thus intimately connected is somewhat of a puzzle.

The late Sir Henry Thompson, who married a musician, and the late Joseph of the Savoy, who was an artist at heart, both despised music at dinner. The former said that it retarded rather than assisted digestion; and the latter remarked that he could never get his cutlets in tune with the band. Either the band was flat and his cutlets were sharp, or vice versâ.

There are a few restaurants in London, some half-dozen at most, where one can dine in peace, undisturbed by potage à la Leoncavallo, poisson à la Rubinstein, rôti à la Tschaikowski, and entremet à la Chaminade. But it would be unwise to say where they are, because it might attract crowds and induce the proprietors to start a band. And, after all, a dinner-table is not a concert platform.

In the "Greville Memoirs" (1831) you may read that dinners of all fools have as good a chance of being agreeable as dinners of all clever people: at least the former are



often gay, and the latter are frequently heavy. Nonsense and folly gilded over with good breeding and *les usages du monde* produce often more agreeable results than a collection of rude, awkward, intellectual powers. This must be our consolation for enjoying "gay" dinners.

In a translation from Dionysius, through Athenæus, occur these lines :—

To roast some beef, to carve a joint with neatness,  
To boil up sauces, and to blow the fire,  
Is anybody's task ; he who does this  
Is but a seasoner and broth-maker ;  
A cook is quite another thing. His mind  
Must comprehend all facts and circumstances :  
Where is the place, and what the time of supper ;  
Who are the guests, and who the entertainer ;  
What fish he ought to buy, and where to buy it.

This shows a nice appreciation of the duties of the all-round cook, supervised by a knowledgeable master, and is preferable to the fastidiousness of Sir Epicure Mammon in "The Alchemist," who leaves the best fare, such as pheasants, calvered salmon, knots, godwits, and lampreys, to his footboy ; confining himself to dainties such as cockles



boiled in silver shells, shrimps swimming in butter of dolphin's milk, carp tongues, camels' heels, barbels' beards, boiled dormice, oiled mushrooms, and the like. One must go back to Roman cookery, via Nero and others, for such gustatory eccentricities, a number of which, one may shrewdly believe, were not precisely what they are described to be in modern English. Do we not know, for instance, that a famous Roman cook (who was probably a Greek), having received an order for anchovies when those fish were out of season, dexterously imitated them out of turnips, colouring, condiments, and the inevitable *garum*; as to the exact and unpleasant constituents of which, authorities, including the great Soyer, differ considerably.

The result cannot have been of the nature described by Miss Lydia Melford in "Humphry Clinker," who called the Bristol waters "so clear, so pure, so mild, so charmingly mawkish."





## CHAPTER III

### THE POET IN THE KITCHEN

“Drinking has indeed been sung, but why, I have heard it asked, have we no ‘Eating Songs’?—for eating is, surely, a fine pleasure. Many practise it already, and it is becoming more general every day. I speak not of the finicking joy of the gourmet, but the joy of an honest appetite in ecstasy, the elemental joy of absorbing quantities of fresh, simple food—mere roast lamb, new potatoes, and peas of living green. It is, indeed, an absorbing pleasure.”

R. LE GALLIENNE.

THE quotation with which I have headed this chapter, though appropriate enough in a sense, disproves itself in the assertion. We have “Eating Songs” in plenty, both in our own language and in foreign tongues, but they have been neglected and spurned, and for that reason they well repay a little



enterprising research. Here and there, throughout our literature, are gems of gastronomical versification, and it is, in fact, impossible to do more than indicate a tithe of the treasures that may be unearthed with a very little trouble and patience.

Among the anthologies of the future, the near future maybe, is undoubtedly the *Anthology of the Kitchen*. It is ready written, and only remains to be gathered. There is barely a poet of note who could not be laid under contribution. Shakespeare, Byron, Béranger, Browning, Burns, Coleridge, Crabbe, Dryden, Goethe, Heine, Landor, Prior, Moore, Rogers, and Villon are the first chance names to occur, but there are many more who might be cited with equal justice.

Thackeray wrote verses on Bouillabaisse ; which it would be absurd to quote, so well are they known. Méry, Alexandre Dumas, Th. de Banville, Th. Gautier, and Aurélien Scholl collaborated, under the editorship of Charles Monselet (himself a gastronomic poet of no mean order), in a little book published in 1859 under the title "*La Cuisinière*



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Poétique." Five years later there appeared in Philadelphia "A Poetical Cook Book," by J. M. M., with charming rhymed recipes for such things as stewed duck and peas :—

When duck and bacon in a mass  
You in a stew-pan lay,  
A spoon around the vessel pass,  
And gently stir away !

The poetical author dilates too upon buckwheat cakes and oatmeal pudding, and quotes Dodsley on butter and Barlow on hasty pudding. Sydney Smith's recipe for a salad is only too well known, and it may be hoped that it is not often tried, because from a gastronomic point of view it is a dire decoction. Arthur Hugh Clough in "Le Diner" (Dipsychus) has this entirely charming verse :—

A clear soup with eggs : *voilà tout* ; of the fish

The *filets de sole* are a moderate dish

*A la Orly*, but you're for red mullet you say.

By the gods of good fare, who can question  
to-day ?

How pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho !

How pleasant it is to have money !

Nearly two hundred years ago (in 1708, to be precise) Dr. William King wrote "The



Art of Cookery," in imitation of Horace's "Art of Poetry"; in the original edition it was advertised as being by the author of "A Tale of a Tub," but although King was a friend of Swift, there seems to have been no authority to make use of his name. In the second edition, in the following year, some letters to Dr. Lister are added, and the title page ascribes the poem to "the Author of the Journey to London," who dedicates it—or, rather, "humbly inscribes" it—to "The Honourable Beefsteak Club." This edition has an exquisitely engraved frontispiece by M. Van der Gucht.

In the fifth volume of Grimod de la Reynière's entrancing "*Almanach des Gourmands*" (1807) there is a poetical epistle *d'un vrai Gourmand à son ami, l'Abbé d'Herville, homme extrêmement sobre, et qui ne cessoit de lui prêcher l'abstinence.* These are a few of his lines :—

Harpagon dit : Il faut manger pour vivre;  
 Et je dis, moi, que je vis pour manger.  
 Que l'on m'appelle un cochon d'épiqueure :  
 C'est un éloge, et non pas une injure.

Subsequent volumes contain many poetical



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references. There is even a hymn to Epicurianism, a fable *gourmande et plus morale encore*, entitled “Les Œufs ; a *logogriphe* ; several chansons ; and a *boutade*. Mortimer Collins, in “The British Birds,” has an exquisitely humorous tourney of three poets who respectively sing the praises of salad ; and the late Dr. Kenealy wrote a book (in 1845) called “Brallaghan, or the Deipnosophists,” in which he tunes his lyre in praise of good food—and Irish whisky. Although Sydney Smith’s salad mixture is useless, his verses entitled “A Receipt to Roast Mutton” are excellent, particularly this verse :—

Gently stir and blow the fire,  
Lay the mutton down to roast,  
Dress it quickly, I desire,  
In the dripping put a toast,  
That I hunger may remove—  
Mutton is the meat I love.

An anonymous author has given us the immortal lines:—

Turkey boiled  
Is turkey spoiled,  
And turkey roast  
Is turkey lost ;  
But for turkey braised  
The Lord be praised !



That they are absolutely true every *Feinschmecker*, as the Germans say, is bound to admit. The famous Cheshire Cheese pudding has not been without its laureate, one J. H. Wadsworth, who opens his pæan thus:—

We sought “The Cheese” with thirst and hunger  
 prest,  
 And own we love the Pudding Day the best,  
 But no one quarrels with the chops cooked here,  
 Or steaks, when wash’d down with old English  
 beer!

The leg of mutton has not lacked its devotees from Thackeray’s—

A plain leg of mutton, my Lucy,  
 I prithee get ready at three,

to Berchoux’ praise of the gigot—

J’aime mieux un tendre gigot  
 Qui, sans pomp et sans étalage,  
 Se montre avec un entourage  
 De laitue ou de haricot.

Sir John Suckling contributes to the poetic garland in his lines:—

The business of the Kitchen’s great  
 And it is fit that men should eat,  
 Nor was it e’er denied.



## THE POET IN THE KITCHEN 47

And an anonymous Scotch poet indites the following ode to luncheons:—

There are the sausages, there are the eggs,  
And there are the chickens with close-fitted legs,  
And there is a bottle of brandy,  
And here some of the best sugar candy,  
Which is better than sugar for coffee.

There are slices from good ham cut off; he  
Who cut them was but an indifferent carver,  
He wanted the delicate hand of a barber.

And there is a dish,

Buttered over! And fish.

Trout and char

Sleeping are,

The smooth-like surface over.

There's a pie made of veal, one of widgeons,  
And there's one of ham mixed with pigeons.

A well-known French critic, Achille (not Octave) Uzanne, has compiled a little collection of menus and receipts in verses, with a notable preface by Chatillon-Plessis, which includes poems on such thrilling subjects as jugged hare, lobster in the American fashion, Charlotte of apples, truffles in champagne, epigrams of lamb, mousse of strawberries, and green peas. A more recent American poetaster has published during the



last few years "Poems of Good Cheer," which are in the manner of fables, such as that of the man who "Wanted Pearls with his Oysters," and the busy broker "Who had no time to eat," and consequently acquired dyspepsia.

Lord Byron too may be allowed to have his say:—

. . . Man is a carnivorous production,  
And must have meals—at least one a day.  
He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction;  
Although his anatomical construction  
Bears vegetables in a grumbling way,  
Your labouring people think, beyond all  
question,  
Beef, veal, and mutton, better for digestion.

One of the most ambitious efforts in the culinary-poetic line is, undoubtedly, "*La Gastronomie, ou l'homme des Champs à Table* ; poème didactique en quatre chants, par J. Berchoux, 1804," wherein is set forth, at some length—firstly, the history of cooking ; then the order of the services ; and lastly, some fugitive pieces which allude to the gay science in choice and poetic terms. The book is enriched with



some exquisite copper-plate engravings by Gravelot, Cochin, and Monsiau. The lines addressed by the author to his contemporaries warning them against the “repas monstreux des Grecs et des Romains” are full of repressed dignity and good sound common sense. One puts down the book with a sense of poetical-gastronomical repletion.

The poetic afflatus has possessed most great cooks, but none with more practical application than the immortal Alexis Soyer, the hero of the Crimea and the Reform Club, who, on the death of his wife, a clever amateur artist, wrote this simple and witty epitaph, “Soyez tranquille.” Gay’s poem on a knuckle of veal is also worthy of record, and an anonymous American poet has immortalized the duck in four pregnant verses.

A very modern poet who writes over the initials of M. T. P. has four charming verses on the propriety of ladies wearing their hats whilst dining. The second and third stanzas read as follows :—



Anchovies from Norwegian shores !  
Sardines from sunny southern seas !  
There's naught my simple soul adores  
One half so ardently as these.  
And while I munch the well-fumed sprat,  
Sit thou and watch and wear thy hat.

I need no entrée, want no bird,  
Nor care for joints, or boiled or roast,  
But my imagination's stirred  
By titillating things on toast.  
Soft roes the commissariat  
Shall serve me opposite thy hat.

Some folks who are not yet very old  
may remember a quaint part-song or quar-  
tette for male voices, entitled "Life is but  
a Melancholy Flower," which was sung  
alternately somewhat in this fashion :—

Life is butter !  
Melon !!  
Cauliflower !!!  
Life is but a melancholy flower !

It had much deserved success in its  
day.

An old recipe for the roasting of a  
swan is very fairly summed up in these  
lines :—



## THE POET IN THE KITCHEN 51

### TO ROAST A SWAN

Take three pounds of beef, beat fine in a mortar,  
Put it into the swan—that is, when you've caught  
her.

Some pepper, salt, mace, some nutmeg, an onion,  
Will heighten the flavour in Gourmand's opinion.  
Then tie it up tight with a small piece of tape,  
That the gravy and other things may not escape.  
A meal paste (rather stiff) should be laid on the  
breast,

And some "whitey brown" paper should cover the  
rest.

Fifteen minutes at least ere the swan you take  
down,

Pull the paste off the bird that the breast may get  
brown.

### THE GRAVY

To the gravy of beef (good and strong) I opine  
You'll be right if you add half a pint of port wine;  
Pour this through the swan—yes, quite through  
the belly,

Then serve the whole up with some hot currant  
jelly.

N.B.—The swan must not be skinned.

This poem has been attributed to Mr.  
George Keech, chef of the Gloucester  
Hotel at Weymouth—of course a famous  
breeding place for swans.



The following recipe for making a "soft" cheese is said to be by Dr. Jenner:—

Would you make a soft cheese? Then I'll tell you how.

Take a gallon of milk quite fresh from the cow ;  
Ere the rennet is added, the dairyman's daughter  
Must throw in a quart of the clearest spring  
water.

When perfectly curdled, so white and so nice,  
You must take it all out of the dish with a slice,  
And put it 'thout breaking with care in the vat,  
With a cheese-cloth at bottom—be sure to mind  
that.

This delicate matter take care not to squeeze,  
But fill as the whey passes off by degrees.  
Next day you may turn it, and do not be loth  
To wipe it quite dry with a clean linen cloth.  
This must be done you cannot well doubt,  
As long as you see the whey oozing out.  
The cheese is now finished, and nice it will be,  
If enveloped in leaves of the green ashen tree.  
Or what will do better, at least full as well,  
In nettles just plucked from the bank of the dell.

In praise of the best food in the world—  
plain British roast and boiled—Mr. G. R.  
Sims has dilated in his weekly columns ; a  
verse from his perfectly correct and strict



## THE POET IN THE KITCHEN 53

“*Ballade* of New-Time Simpson’s” is well worth quoting :—

They do not call the saddle “selle”  
That you with currant jelly eat ;  
Boiled fowl’s not *à la* Béchamel.  
Your eyes no foreign phrases meet  
That English waiters can’t repeat,  
And so to Simpson’s I repair.  
The English kitchen’s bad to beat,  
Plain roast and boiled are British fare.

The “*Envoi*,” which commences most cleverly according to traditional rule, runs as follows :—

Prince’s and Carlton, you I greet,  
Savoy, I own your chef is rare ;  
But you with Simpson’s shall compete.  
Plain roast and boiled are British fare.

To come back to recipes, here is one for the famous *Homard à l’Américaine* written by the chef of the Grand International Hotel at Chicago, who is quite annoyed with M. Rostand for his obvious plagiarism in “*Cyrano de Bergerac*.”



## COMMENT ON FAIT LE HOMARD À L'AMÉRICAINNE

Prenez un homard qu'on vend

Bien vivant ;

Avant qu'il se carapate

Sans vous laisser attendre,

Sans souffrir,

Détachez-lui chaque patte.

Faites alors revenir

Et blondir

Du beurre en la casserole ;

Fourrez-y votre homard

Sans retard,

Mais avant qu'il ne rissole

Ajoutez un court-bouillon

De bouillon

A vous brûler la bedaine !

Faites cuire. Servez-le

Et c'est le

Homard à l'américaine !

Many curious old poems may be found by careful delving in the books our great-grand-fathers used to read, and which we ought to read, but don't. For instance, the Roxborough Ballads contain a delightful poem briefly entitled "The Cook-Maid's Garland : or the out-of-the-way Devil : shewing how



## THE POET IN THE KITCHEN 55

four highwaymen were bit by an ingenious cook-maid" (1720). There is a still older ballad in the same collection called "The Coy Cook-Maid, who was courted simultaneously by Irish, Welch, Spanish, French and Dutch, but at last was conquered by a poor English Taylor"; this is in black-letter, and is dated 1685.

A French lady with a happy knack of verse has written the following rhymed recipe for

### SAUCE MAYONNAISE

Dans un grand bol en porcelaine

Un jaune d'œuf étant placé,

Sel et poivre, vinaigre à peine,

Et le travail est commencé.

On verse l'huile goutte à goutte ;

La mayonnaise prend du corps,

Epaississant, sans qu'on s'en doute,

En flot luisant, jusqu'aux bords.

Quand vous jugez que l'abondance

Peut suffire à votre repas,

Au frais mettez-la par prudence. . . .

Tout est fini ; n'y touchez pas !

Under the title of "Women I have never married," O. S. of "Punch" writes delight-



fully on the lady who knew too much about eating. This is one of his verses :—

She came. She passed a final word  
Upon the *bisque*, the *Mornay* sole,  
The *poulet* (said she thought the bird  
Shewed at its best *en casserole*);  
She found the *parfait* “quite first-rate,”  
Summed up the chef as “rather handy,”  
Knew the Lafitte for '88,  
And twice encored a fine old brandy.

The following couplets are by—I think—  
an American author.

Always have lobster sauce with salmon,  
And put mint sauce your roasted lamb on.  
In dressing salad mind this law,  
With two hard yolks use one that's raw.  
Roast veal with rich stock gravy serve,  
And pickled mushrooms, too, observe.  
Roast pork, sans apple sauce, past doubt,  
Is “Hamlet” with the Prince left out.  
Your mutton chops with paper cover  
And make them amber-brown all over.  
Broil lightly your beefsteak. To fry it  
Argues contempt of Christian diet.  
To roast spring chickens is to spoil 'em;  
Just split 'em down the back and broil 'em.



## THE POET IN THE KITCHEN 57

It gives true epicures the vapours  
To see boiled mutton minus capers.  
The cook deserves a hearty cuffing  
Who serves roast fowl with tasteless stuffing.  
Nice oyster sauce gives zest to cod—  
A fish, when fresh, to feast a god.

The Old Beef Steak Society, otherwise known as the Sublime Society of Beef Steaks, and of which the full history has too often appeared in print, entertained the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV, on his election as a member ; the following is a verse of a song written in honour of the occasion by the poet-laureate to the Society, Captain Charles Morris of “ Pall Mall ” fame :—

While thus we boast a general creed,  
In honour of our shrine, sir,  
You find the world long since agreed  
That beef was food divine, sir ;  
And British fame still tells afar  
This truth, where'er she wanders,  
For wine, for women, and for war,  
Beefsteaks make Alexanders.

I venture to think that this little excerpt from Lafcadio Hearn's “ Kokoro ” is worthy of record here as a piece of real poetry in



prose. It is from a story called "The Nun of the Temple of Amida." "Once daily, at a fixed hour, she would set for the absent husband, in his favourite room, little repasts faultlessly served on dainty lacquered trays—miniature meals such as are offered to the ghosts of the ancestors and to the gods. (Such a repast offered to the spirit of the absent one loved is called a *kagé-sen*, lit. 'shadow-tray.') These repasts were served at the east side of the room, and his kneeling-cushion placed before them. The reason they were served at the east side was because he had gone east. Before removing the food, she always lifted the cover of the little soup-bowl to see if there was vapour upon its lacquered inside surface. For it is said that if there be vapour on the inside of the lid covering food so offered, the absent beloved is well. But if there be none, he is dead, because that is a sign that his soul has returned by itself to seek nourishment. O-Toyo found the lacquer thickly beaded with vapour day by day."

It would be unfair to omit mention of Molière, who so often and wisely devotes



attention to the culinary craft, for which, indeed, he had a high appreciation. Did he not read his plays to his cook? A typical passage is that from his "Femmes Savantes," when Chrysale expatiates to Philaminte and Bélise.

Que ma servante manque aux lois de Vaugelas,  
 Pourvu qu'a la cuisine elle ne manque pas.  
 J'aime bien mieux pour moi qu'en épluchant ses  
     herbes,  
 Elle accommode mal les noms avec les verbes,  
 Et rédise cent fois un bas et méchant mot,  
 Que de brûler ma viande ou saler trop mon pot.  
 Je vis de bonne soupe, et non de beau langage,  
 Vaugelas n'apprend point à bien faire un potage ;  
 Et Malherbe et Balzac, si savans en beaux mots,  
 En cuisine peutêtre auraient été des sots.

Very few people, I am afraid, read the entirely delightful verse of Mortimer Collins, poet, journalist, novelist, epicure (in the best sense), and country-lover—all in one. He was among the nowadays less-known masters of gastronomics, a man who, although no cook himself, knew by intuition and experience just what was right, and if it were wrong, just why it was wrong. His



novels and poems, although very unequal, do not deserve to be forgotten, for they contain many fine, thoughtful, and beautiful passages. His burlesque of Aristophanes, "The British Birds," is, in its way, a masterpiece. He wrote much and well on cookery and dining, both in prose and verse. Here follows one of his sonnets from a sequence addressed to the months—from a gastronomic point of view.

## JUNE

O perfect period of the sweet birds' tune,  
 Of Philomel and Procne, known to fable;  
 Of wayward morns, and never utterable  
 Joys of the evenglome, beneath the moon!  
 Cool be thy food, O gourmand, runs the Rune:  
 Pigeon and quail are suited to the table;  
 Anchovy and sardine are noticeable;  
 Red mullet, first of fish, is prime in June.  
 Richmond and Greenwich tempt the Londoner  
 To dine where Thames is cool, and whitebait  
 crisp,  
 And soft the manners are and lax the morals.  
 But I (when twilight's breezes softly stir,  
 Rob the rich roses, though the woodbine lisp)  
 Dine on my lawn hedged in by limes and laurels.

The "Minora Carmina" of the late



## THE POET IN THE KITCHEN 61

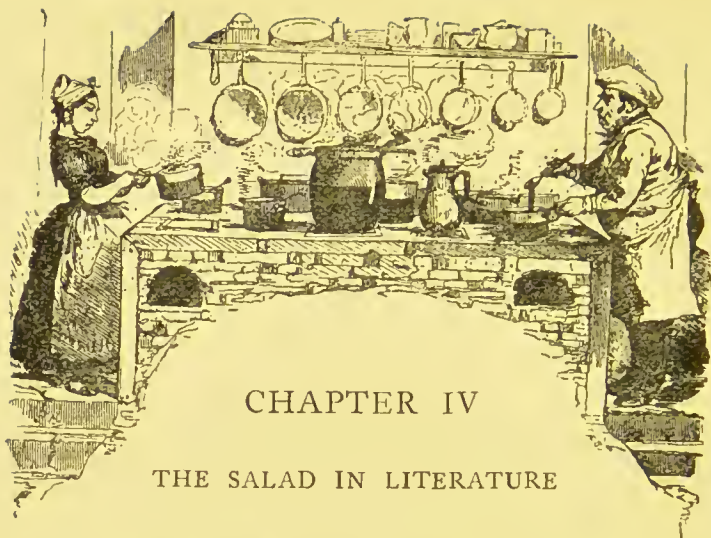
C. C. R., whose verse has much of the charm of J. K. S. and C. S. Calverley, contains a few verses anent the pleasure of dining out, which are headed

### NUNC EST COENANDUM

Although the season sadly  
May open, in contrast grim  
With those when pleasure madly  
Whirled on the wings of Whim—  
Though sporting members sigh for  
The huntsman, hound, and horn,  
And invalids loud cry for  
Health-spots from which they're torn ;  
Yet e'en to town detested  
Comes comfort in the line—  
“ Your presence is requested ”—  
You're going out to dine.

It would be easy to extend this list indefinitely, but enough is as good as a feast.





## CHAPTER IV

### THE SALAD IN LITERATURE

“I could digest a salad gathered in a church-yard as well as in a garden. I wonder not at the French with their dishes of frogs, snails, and toadstools ; nor at the Jews for locusts and grasshoppers ; but being amongst them make them my common viands, and I find they agree with my stomach as well as theirs.”

SIR THOMAS BROWNE, “Religio Medici.”

WE have it on the authority of Chaucer that salad is cooling food, for he says :—

. . . And after that they yede about gadering  
Pleasaunt Salades which they made hem eat,  
For to refresh their great unkindly heat.

That the eating of green meat is and always has been closely bound up with healthy human life is a fact which needs no demonstration ; but the constantly recurring



references to it in the literature of all ages would seem to point the moral in so far as salads must always have appealed peculiarly to those leading a more or less sedentary life.

In a serious Biblical commentary of the eighteenth century, Baron von Vaerst, a German savant, refers to Nebuchadnezzar's diet of grass as a punishment which did not in any way consist in the eating of salad, but in the enforced absence of vinegar, oil, and salt. That salad adds a zest to life is proved by St. Anthony, who said that the pious old man, St. Hieronymus, lived to the green old age of 105, and during the last ninety years of his life existed wholly upon bread and water, but "not without a certain lusting after salad." This is confirmed by St. Athanasius.

In Shakespeare's "Henry VI," Jack Cade remarks that a salad "is not amiss to cool a man's stomach in the hot weather." Cleopatra too refers to her "salad days, when she was green in judgment, cool in blood." In "Le Quadragesimal Spiritual," a work on theology published in Paris in 1521, these lines occur :—



La Salade moult proffitable  
Signe la parolle de Dieu  
Qu'il faut ouyr en chascun lieu.  
Pêcheurs, entendez ce notable !

All writers agree as to the cooling properties of salads, and particularly lettuce, on the blood. In his "Acetaria: a Discourse of Sallets" (1699), John Evelyn says that lettuce, "though by Metaphor call'd Mortuorum Cibi (to say nothing of Adonis and his sad Mistress) by reason of its soporiferous quality, ever was and still continues the principal Foundation of the universal Tribe of Sallets, which is to Cool and Refresh. And therefore in such high esteem with the Ancients, that divers of the Valerian family dignify'd and enobled their name with that of Lactucinii." He goes on to say that "the more frugal Italians and French, to this Day, Accept and gather *Ogni Verdura*, any thing almost that's Green and Tender, to the very Tops of Nettles ; so as every Hedge affords a Sallet (not unagreeable) season'd with its proper Oxybaphon of Vinegar, Salt, Oyl, &c., which doubtless gives it both the Relish and Name



## THE SALAD IN LITERATURE 65

of Salad, Ensalade, as with us of Sallet, from the Sapidity, which renders not *Plants* and *Herbs* alone, but *Men* themselves, and their Conversations, pleasant and agreeable."

In praise of Lettuce he has much to say, and waxes almost dithyrambic as to its virtues. "It is indeed of Nature more cold and moist than any of the rest ; yet less astringent, and so harmless that it may safely be eaten raw in Fevers ; for it allays Heat, bridles Choler, extinguishes Thirst, excites Appetite, kindly Nourishes, and above all represses Vapours, conciliates Sleep, mitigates Pain ; besides the effect it has upon the Morals. Galen (whose beloved Sallet it was) from its pinguid, subdulcid and agreeable Nature, says it breeds the most laudable blood."

And again : " We see how necessary it is that in the composure of a Sallet every plant should come in to bear its part without being overpowered by some herb of a stronger taste, but should fall into their place like the notes in music."



Here is a salad recipe, *temp.* Richard II.

Take parsel, sawge, garlyc, chibolles, oynons, lettes, borage, mynte, poirettes, fenel, and cressis ; lave and waithe hem clene, pike hem, plucke hem smalle wyth thyne honde, and myng hem wel wyth rawe oyl, lay on vynegar and salt and serve ytt forth.

This must have been a strong salad, and full-flavoured rather than delicate. "Honde" is of course "hand," and to "myng" is to mix. The etymology of the recipe is interesting.

Old Gervase Markham, in his "English Housewife," has this quaint account of how to make a "Strange Sallet."

First, if you would set forth any Red flower, that you know or have seen, you shall take your pots of preserved Gilly-flowers, and suting the colours answerable to the flower, you shall proportion it forth, and lay the shape of the Flower in a Fruit dish, then with your Purslane leaves make the Green Coffin of the Flower, and with the Purslane stalks make the stalk of the Flower, and the divisions of the leaves and branches ; then with the thin slices of Cucumers, make their leaves in true proportions, jagged or otherwise ; and thus you may set forth some full blown, some half blown and some in the bud, which will be pretty and



## THE SALAD IN LITERATURE 67

curious. And if you will set forth yellow flowers, take the pots of Primroses and Cowslips, if blew flowers, then the pots of Violets or Buglosse flowers, and these Sallets are both for shew and use, for they are more excellent for taste, than for to look on.

Another variety of old "Sallet" is referred to in "The Gentlewoman's Delight" (1654), which instructs one

How to make a Sallet of all manner of Hearbs. Take your hearbs, and pick them clean, and the floures; wash them clean, and swing them in a strainer; then put them into a dish, and mingle them with Cowcumbers, and Lemons, sliced very thin; then scrape on Sugar, and put in Vinegar and Oil; then spread the floures on the top; garnish your dish with hard Eggs, and all sorts of your floures; scrape on Sugar and serve it.

An even earlier work, Cogan's "Haven of Health" (1589), has the following reference: "Lettuse is much used in salets in the sommer tyme with vinegar, oyle, and sugar and salt, and is formed to procure appetite for meate, and to temper the heate of the stomach and liver."

Montaigne recounts a conversation he had with an Italian chef who had served in



the kitchen of Cardinal Caraffa up to the death of his gastronomic eminence. "I made him," he says, "tell me something about his post. He gave me a lecture on the science of eating, with a gravity and magisterial countenance as if he had been determining some vexed question in theology. . . . The difference of salads, according to the seasons, he next discoursed upon. He explained what sorts ought to be prepared warm, and those which should always be served cold ; the way of adorning and embellishing them in order to render them seductive to the eye. After this he entered on the order of table-service, a subject full of fine and important considerations."

An excerpt from "a late exquisite comedy" called *The Lawyer's Fortune, or Love in a Hollow Tree*, is quoted by Dr. King (1709) :—

*Mrs. Favourite.* Mistress, shall I put any Mushrooms, Mangoes, or Bamboons into the Sallad ?

*Lady Bonona.* Yes, I prithee, the best thou hast.

*Mrs. Favourite.* Shall I use Ketchop or Anchovies in the Gravy ?

*Lady Bonona.* What you will !



## THE SALAD IN LITERATURE 69

A quaint old book on Salads is entitled "On the Use and Abuse of Salads in general and Salad Plants in Particular," by Johann Friedrich Schütze, Doctor of Medicine, and Grand-Ducal Saxe-Coburg-Meiningen, Physician at Sonnenburg and Neuhaus: Leipzig, 1758. The learned doctor adopts the classical division of humanity into the *Temperamentum Sanguineum*, or warm and damp, the *Cholericum*, or warm and dry, the *Phlegmaticum*, or cold and damp, and the *Melancholicum*, or cold and dry. To each of these classes a particular form of Salad applies, and none other.

When Pope Sixtus the Fifth was an obscure monk he had a great friend in a certain lawyer who sank steadily into poverty what time the monk rose to the Papacy. The poor lawyer journeyed to Rome to seek aid from his old friend the Pope, but he fell sick by the wayside and told his doctor to let the Pope know of his sad state. "I will send him a salad," said Sixtus, and duly dispatched a basket of lettuces to the invalid. When the lettuces were opened money was found in their hearts. Hence the Italian



proverb of a man in need of money : " He wants one of Sixtus the Fifth's salads."

Fourcroy and Chaptal, notable chemists of the end of the eighteenth century, unite in praise of salads, and have written disquisitions on the dressing thereof; and Rabelais opines that the best salad-dressing is Good Humour, which is just the sort of thing that one might expect from him. His references to salad are numerous, and in the one oft-quoted case humorously apposite.

In the olden time salads were mixed by pretty women, and they did it with their hands. This was so well understood that down at least to the time of Rousseau (Littré gives a quotation from the "Nouvelle Heloise," VI. 2) the phrase *Elle peut retourner la salade avec les doigts* was used to describe a woman as being still young and beautiful. " Dans le siècle dernier," says Littré, " les jeunes femmes retournaient la salade avec les doigts : cette locution a disparu avec l'usage lui-même."

Among the gastrological Italian authors of the seventeenth century I must refer to Salvatore Massonio, who wrote a great work



on the manner of dressing salads, entitled "Archidipno, overo dell' Insalata e dell' uso di essa, Trattato nuovo Curioso e non mai più dato in luce. Da Salvatore Massonio, Venice, 1627." The British Museum copy, by the way, belonged to Sir Joseph Banks. As was usual in those leisurely and spacious times, there is a most glowing dedication beginning thus: "A Molto Illustri Signori miei sempre osservandissimi i Signori fratelli Ludovico Antonio e Fabritio Coll' Antonii." There is also a compendious bibliography of 114 authors consulted and mentioned in this work, which, indeed, is of considerable importance and of great interest.

Every one knows the oft-told tale of the French *émigré* who went about to noble-men's houses mixing delicate salads at a high fee. Most authorities refer to him as d'Albignac, although Dr. Doran, in his "Table Traits," calls him le Chevalier d'Aubigné; but Grenville Murray, who generally knew what he was writing about, says that his name was Gaudet. However, that matters little. He, whoever he was, appears to have been an enterprising hustler



of the period, and it is recorded that he made a decent little fortune on which he eventually retired to his native land to enjoy peace and plenty for the remainder of his days.

In Mortimer Collins's "The British Birds, by the Ghost of Aristophanes" (1872), there is a poetic tourney between three poets for the laureateship of Cloud-Cuckooland ; the subject is "Salad." The poet with the "redundant brow" sings :—

O cool in the summer is salad,  
And warm in the winter is love ;  
And a poet shall sing you a ballad  
Delicious thereon and thereof.  
A singer am I, if no sinner,  
My muse has a marvellous wing,  
And I willingly worship at dinner  
The Sirens of Spring.

Take endive . . . like love it is bitter ;  
Take beet . . . for like love it is red :  
Crisp leaf of the lettuce shall glitter,  
And cress from the rivulet's bed :  
Anchovies foam-born, like the Lady  
Whose beauty has maddened this bard ;  
And olives from groves that are shady ;  
And eggs . . . boil 'em hard.



## THE SALAD IN LITERATURE 73

The poet with the "redundant beard" chants next.

Waitress, with eyes so marvellous black,

And the blackest possible lustrous gay tress,  
This is the mouth of the Zodiac

When I want a pretty deft-handed waitress.  
Bring a china bowl, you merry young soul;

Bring anything green, from worsted to celery;  
Bring pure olive oil, from Italy's soil . . .

Then your china bowl we'll well array.  
When the time arrives chip choicest chives,

And administer quietly chili and capsicum . . .  
(Young girls do not quite know what's what

Till as a poet into their laps I come).

Then a lobster fresh as fresh can be

(When it screams in the pot I feel a murderer):  
After which I fancy we

Shall want a few bottles of Heidseck or Roederer.

The poet of "the redundant hair" then sings his lay in Tennysonian-Arthurian lines, and is ultimately awarded the laureateship of Cloud-Cuckoo-Town.

The verses do not show poor Collins at his best, and are only interesting as relating to the subject of salad. Other songs of his have never been excelled in a certain delicate charm of fancy and quaint turns of versification.



Many salads have been mixed on the stage ; the most famous perhaps is the Japanese salad which occurs in Alexandre Dumas fils' "Francillon" (produced at the Théâtre Français, 17 January, 1887). It is not orthodox, and, even when deftly mixed, not particularly nice, the flavours being coarsely blended. Annette de Riverolles, inimitably played by Reichemberg of the smiling teeth, dictates the recipe to Henri de Symeux, originally acted by Laroche. Here is the passage :—

*Annette.* You must boil your potatoes in broth, then cut them into slices, just as you would for an ordinary salad, and whilst they are still lukewarm, add salt, pepper, very good olive oil, with the flavour of the fruit, vinegar . . .

*Henri.* Tarragon ?

*Annette.* Orleans is better, but it is not important. But what is important is half a glass of white wine, Château-Yquem, if possible. Plenty of finely-chopped herbs. Now boil some very large mussels in a small broth (*court-bouillon*), with a head of celery, drain them well and add them to the dressed potatoes. Mix it all up delicately.

*Thérèse.* Fewer mussels than potatoes ?

*Annette.* One-third less. The flavour of the mussels must be gradually felt ; it must not be anticipated, and it must not assert itself.



## THE SALAD IN LITERATURE 75

*Stanislas.* Very well put.

*Annette.* Thank you. When the salad is finished, mixed . . .

*Henri.* Lightly . . .

*Annette.* Then you cover it with slices of truffles, like professors' skull-caps.

*Henri.* Boiled in champagne.

*Annette.* Of course. All this must be done a couple of hours before dinner, so that the salad may get thoroughly cold before serving it.

*Henri.* You could put the salad-bowl on ice.

*Annette.* No, no. It must not be assaulted with ice. It is very delicate, and the different flavours must combine peacefully. Did you like the salad you had to-day?

*Henri.* Delicious!

*Annette.* Well, follow my recipe and you will make it equally well.

A few years ago Mr. Charles Brookfield mixed an admirable salad on the stage of the Haymarket in the course of his clever monologue "Nearly Seven." On 31 January, 1831, "La salade d'oranges, ou les étrennes dans la mansarde," by M. M. Varin and Desvergers, was played at the Palais Royal. The first-named author was a sort of gastro-nomic playwright, for he wrote plays called "Le cuisinier politique," "J'ai mangé mon ami," and others.



In the Bohemian quarter of Paris, not so very many years ago, the students of the *plein air* school, the *Paysagistes*, used to sing this song at their convivial meetings:—

Ah! que j'aime avec de la salade,  
Un gros morceau de jambon!  
Y a pas danger qu'on soit jamais malade  
Quand on mange avec de la salade  
Un bon morceau de jambon.  
Amis, cassons les pots, les plats, les verres,  
Cassons les verres, les plats, les pots;  
Puisqu'il n'y a plus dans l'plat qu'des pommes  
de terre,  
Cassons les verres, les pots, les plats!

“When summer is icumen in,” one naturally turns to the cooling salad, the refreshing salmon mayonnaise, and the concomitant delights of mid-season entertaining. Regularly at that time of the year learned pundits in the daily papers tell us with portentous gravity what we ought to eat and what we ought to let alone. All this is the direst nonsense. A man or a woman of sense will eat that for which he or she feels inclined, and will have the requisite gastronomic gumption to avoid heating dishes which are unseasonable and unpalatable.



With all changes of the weather sensible people accommodate their diet to the meteorological conditions; fish is preferable to meat, and fruit plays its strong suit, because its cooling juices are just what we yearn to dally with when our appetites are a little under the weather. All this is axiomatic. Of salads in particular. I should like to give here and now the recipe of a salad which I have found most soothing and comforting in hot weather. I may, perhaps, be permitted to act as godfather and christen it "Vanity Fair Salad." It is quite simple and wholesome and toothsome. Here followeth the recipe.

VANITY FAIR SALAD.—Take eight to ten cold cooked artichoke bottoms (*fonds d'artichauts*), fresh, not preserved, and the yellow hearts of two young healthy lettuces (*cœurs de laitue*). Break them into pieces with a silver fork or your fingers (on no account let them be touched by steel); add a not too thinly sliced cucumber, peeled; toss these together. Let them stand for half an hour; then drain off all the water. Now add two or three tablespoonfuls of pickled red cabbage, minus all vinegar, and a dozen sliced-up radishes. Add the dressing. As to this I prefer not to dogmatize. My own mixture is three and a half tablespoonfuls



of the very best Nice olive oil to one of wine vinegar and one-half of tarragon, with salt, pepper, French mustard, and three drops of Tabasco sauce. But this is a matter of opinion, and I insist on nothing except the total avoidance of that horrible furniture-polish mixture sold in quaint convoluted bottles, and humorously dubbed "salad sauce." Just before serving sprinkle the salad with chopped chervil and a suspicion of chives.

Our great-grandmothers had various and curious recipes for the assuagement of summer fevers and megrims of that nature. From an old volume of "The Lady's Companion, or an infallible Guide to the Fair Sex," published anonymously in 1743, I cull the following recipe for "Gascoign Powder."

Take prepar'd Crabs' Eyes, Red Coral, White Amber, very finely powdered, of each half an Ounce; burnt Hartshorn, half an Ounce; Pearls very finely powdered, and Oriental Bezoar, an Ounce of each; of the black Tops of Crabs' Claws, finely powdered, four Ounces. Grind all these on a Marble Stone, till they cast a greenish Colour; then make it into Balls with Jelly made of English Vipers Skins, which may be made, and will jelly like Hartshorn.

Of course, this was never meant to be taken seriously, but the old cookery-book



compilers always thought that a few of these pseudo-medieval recipes, assumed to have been compounded by the wise men of old, added a certain dignity to their otherwise quite harmless volumes.

The late Sir Henry Thompson recommends that the host or hostess should mix the salad, because not many servants can be trusted to execute the simple details.

Mixing one saltspoon of salt and half that quantity of pepper in a tablespoon which is to be filled three times consecutively with the best fresh olive oil, stirring each briskly until the condiments have been thoroughly mixed and at the same time distributed over the salad, this is next to be tossed thoroughly but lightly, until every portion glistens, scattering meantime a little finely chopped fresh tarragon and chervil, with a few atoms of chives over the whole, so that sparkling green particles spot, as with a pattern, every portion of the leafy surface. Lastly, but only immediately before serving, one small tablespoonful of mild French, or better still, Italian red-wine vinegar, is to be sprinkled over all, followed by another tossing of the salad.

“La Salade de la Grande Jeanne” is a pretty child’s story by the prolific writer, P. J. Stahl (really P. J. Hetzel), telling of



the friendship of a tiny tot named Marie and a cow named Jeanne. They were born on the same day, but the calf grew to a big cow long before Marie became a big girl, but they remained firm friends, and Marie always took Jeanne to the pasture and Jeanne in return took care of Marie.

One day Marie's little brother Jacques had a brilliant idea. He pitied poor Jeanne having always to eat her grass just plain without any dressing. How much better she would enjoy her food if it were properly mixed into a salad. So Jacques borrowed a big salad-bowl from his mother, and mixed a bundle of grass with oil and vinegar and pepper and salt. He put the bowl before Jeanne, who, being a polite cow, tasted the strange dish. Hardly had her great tongue plunged into the grass than she withdrew it with a melancholy moo, and swinging her tail in an expostulatory manner, she trotted off to the brook to take a long drink of water.

The moral is very trite. "The simple cuisine of nature suits cows better than that of man."





“Every individual, who is not perfectly imbecile and void of understanding, is an epicure in his way ; the epicures in boiling potatoes are innumerable. The perfection of all enjoyments depends on the perfection of the faculties of the mind and body ; the temperate man is the greatest epicure, and the only true voluptuary.”

DR. KITCHINER.

OLD myths die hard. Nevertheless, as we grow older and wiser and saner and duller, we drop the illusions of our youth, and one by one our cherished beliefs fall from us, argued away by force of circumstance, lack of substantiation, or sheer proof to the contrary.

In this last category we must perforce reckon the excellent Mrs. Hannah Glasse



and her immortal saying, "First catch your hare, then cook it." Alas and alack, Mrs. Glasse never existed—"there never was no sich person"—and, moreover, the cookery book bearing her name, in none of its many editions, contains the oft-quoted words.

The actual facts, although, indeed, these are open to a certain amount of dubiety, appear to be as follows. In Boswell's "Johnson" there are several references to one Edward Dilly, who with his brother Charles carried on a flourishing book-shop in the Poultry. Dr. Johnson often dined with these estimable men, and at their table met most of the wits and scholars of the day. The great lexicographer referred to the brothers as his "worthy friends." It is on record that Edward Dilly, in the presence of Boswell, Mayo, Miss Seward, and the Duke of Bedford's tutor, the Rev. Mr. Beresford, said to Dr. Johnson, "Mrs. Glasse's 'Cookery,' which is the best, was written by Dr. Hill. Half the trade knows this."

Now this Dr. John Hill (not Aaron Hill, as assumed by Mr. Waller) was a rather



interesting personality. He was a brilliant man in many directions, who misused his talents, and devoted his energies to so many various professions that it is not surprising to learn that he succeeded permanently in none. It is known of him that he was at different times apothecary, actor, pamphleteer, journalist, novelist, dramatist, herbalist, naturalist, and quack-doctor. He took a degree at St. Andrews, and his nickname was "Dr. Atall." He married the sister of the then Lord Ranelagh, and by some manner of means got himself decorated with the Swedish order of the Polar Star, on the strength of which he paraded himself as Sir John Hill. No one, however, appears to have taken him at his own appraisal, for he was the general butt of wits, epigrammatists, and lampoonists. His death was attributed to the use of his own gout remedy, and these lines to him still survive :—

For physic and farces  
His equal there scarce is ;  
His farces are physic,  
His physic a farce is.

Well, this same John Hill, in his earlier



and more obscure days, was doing hack-work for the booksellers, and also following the business of an apothecary in St. Martin's Lane. This must have been in the year 1744 or 1745. He was struck (as who might not have been) by the ease with which a new cookery book might be compiled by extracting the best recipes from scores of old ones, and rehashing them with original remarks and new settings. He had plenty of material to work upon. The best-known cookery books prior to that date were, according to Dr. Kitchiner (who wrongly dates Mrs. Glasse 1757), Sarah Jackson's "Cook's Director," La Chapelle's "Modern Cook," Kidder's "Receipts," Harrison's "Family Cook," "Adam's Luxury and Eve's Cookery," "The Accomplish'd Housewife," "Lemery on Food," Arnaud's "Alarm to all Persons touching their Health and Lives," Smith's "Cookery," Hall's "Royal Cookery," Dr. Salmon's "Cookery," "The Compleat Cook," and many more.

Hill accordingly made up his book, and his introduction was certainly ingenuous and



modest ; one phrase will prove this : “ If I had not wrote in the high polite style, I hope I shall be forgiven ; for my intention is to instruct the lower sort.” The sly dog knew his public, and this is further proved by his not putting his book to the world through a bookseller, but publishing it himself, and evolving an entirely new method of distribution. Among his friends he numbered the ingenious Mrs. Ashburn, or Ashburner, as it is spelt in some of the later editions. This good lady kept a glass and china shop in Fleet Street, hard by Temple Bar, and her customers came from the fashionable squares of Bloomsbury and St. James. Hill made an arrangement with Mrs. Ashburn, whereby she sold his book over her counter and recommended it warmly to all the ladies who called at her shop.

In order to make the illusion of authorship more complete, a female name was wanted for the title page. What could be more simple than “ Mrs. Glasse,” seeing that Mrs. Ashburn kept a glass shop ? The exact title of the *magnum opus* ran, “ The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy, which



far exceeds anything yet published. By a Lady. Printed for the author and sold at Mrs. Ashburn's, a china shop, the corner of Fleet Ditch, 1745." The actual name of Mrs. Glasse did not, however, appear on the title page until the issue of the third edition, for the book was a great success from the first; every one came to Mrs. Ashburn's to buy it, and its popularity vastly helped the glass and china trade.

About fourteen years ago a lively discussion as to the authentic authorship of Mrs. Glasse filled several columns in the newspapers, the principal correspondents being Mr. W. F. Waller and Mr. G. A. Sala. It was suggested that "first catch your hare" was a misprint for "first *case* your hare." Mr. Waller proved that neither of these passages occurred in any known edition of the book, although *case*, meaning "to skin," would have been entirely legitimate and in place.

Shakespeare says in "All's Well That Ends Well":—

We'll make you some sport with the fox ere  
we case him



And a reference to Beaumont and Fletcher's "Love's Pilgrimage" gives the lines —

Some of them knew me,  
Else had they cased me like a coney.

The actual phrase used is "First cast your hare," or, in another edition, "Take your hare, and when it is cast." This simply means flayed or skinned, and was commonly used at the time. The verb "to scotch" or "to scatch" is East Anglian, and has the same meaning. So much for the authenticity of the quotation.

Curiously enough, in the newspaper controversy above referred to, George Augustus Sala strongly supported the claims of Mrs. Glasse herself as the real author, and there certainly appears to be some circumstantial evidence as to a lady of that name who was "habit-maker to the Royal family" about that period, although her connexion with the culinary art is not to be traced. Incidentally Sala mentions a receipt from a cookery book written by "An ingenious Gaul" towards the middle of the seventeenth century, which begins with what he terms "A Culinary Truism," since changed



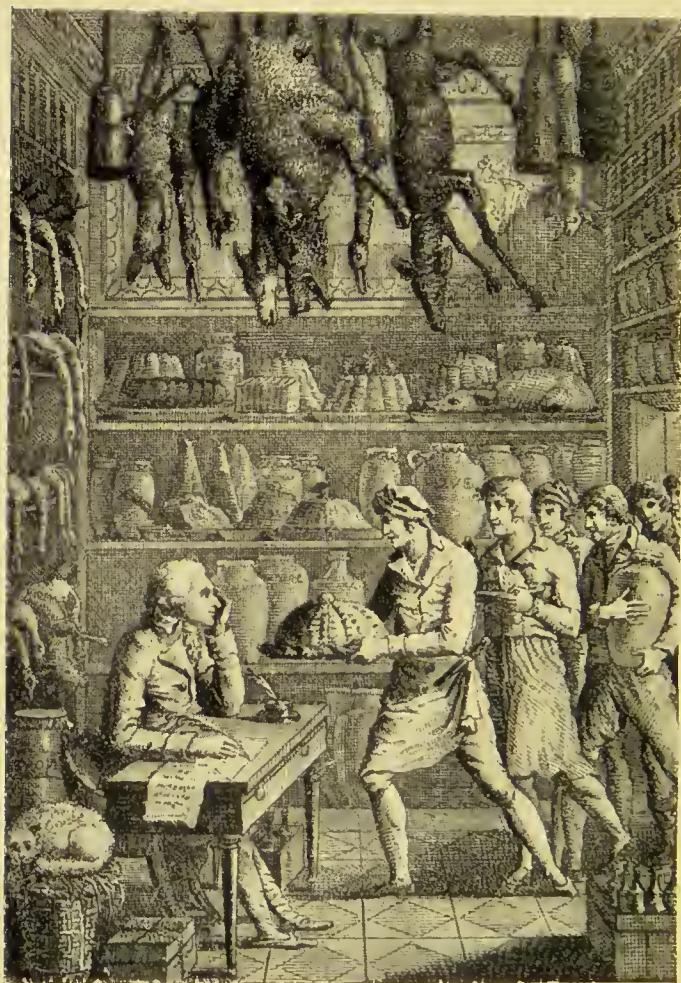
into "A proverbial platitude"—namely, the words "*pour faire un civet, prenez un lièvre.*" This is, however, of course merely a commonplace of the kitchen, and, according to the learned authority of Dr. Thudichum, the imperative of *prendre* has not the *catching* meaning apparently attached to it by Sala.

Abraham Hayward, Q.C., whose "Art of Dining," a reprint of certain "Quarterly Review" articles, must always remain one of the greatest classics of English gastronomical literature, says that Mrs. Glasse's cookery book was written by Dr. Hunter, of York. This is, of course, an egregious error. Dr. Hunter was the author of "Culina Famulatrix Medicinæ ; or, Receipts in Modern Cookery" (1804, fourth edition), with the delightful dedication, "To those gentlemen who freely give two guineas for a Turtle Dinner at the Tavern, when they might have a more wholesome one at Home for Ten Shillings, this work is humbly dedicated"; and an exquisite frontispiece of a pig, by Carr, headed "Transmigration"; but he was in no way responsible for Mrs. Glasse.









LES AUDIENCES D'UN GOURMAND

(A. B. L. Grimod de la Reynière inv. 1804)

[To face page 89]



The case is very fairly summed up by Mrs. Joseph Pennell in "My Cookery Books." She says, speaking of Mrs. Glasse: "Her fame is due, not to her genius, for she really had none, but to the fact that her own generation believed there was no such person, and after generations believed in her as the author of a phrase she never wrote." There really seems no more to be said on the matter.

It matters little, after all, whether Mrs. Glasse really existed or not; anyhow, some of her precepts are excellent and endure to this day. She preached thorough mastication as a primary rule for good digestion. This is thoroughly sound and praiseworthy.

"Most men dig their graves with their teeth," so says an old Chinese proverb, meaning, no doubt, that we all eat too much, and too fast, and too often, and too promiscuously. The propriety of eating slowly ought always to be remembered. Mr. Gladstone's thirty-two bites are historical. Napoleon was a terribly fast eater, and this habit is supposed to have paralysed him on two of the most critical occasions of his life,



the battles of Leipzig and Borodino, which he might have converted into decisive and influential victories by pushing his advantages as he was wont. On each of these occasions he was known to have been suffering from indigestion. On the third day at Dresden, too, the German novelist Hoffmann, who was present in the town, asserts that the Emperor would have done much more than he did but for the effects of a shoulder of mutton stuffed with onions.

It is a certain fact, although difficult to prove by statistics, that a large proportion of the drink consumed by the working-classes is directly due to the bad cooking which they have to endure in their homes. Improve the workman's cuisine, and you will automatically lessen the drink bill. This is a point of view which philanthropists and temperance folk might adopt with immense advantage, and with practically immediate results.

Dr. Max Einhorn has recently written on the subject of correct eating, which he divides into three distinct headings: Tachyphagia, Bradyphagia, and Euphagia. The first of



these is the common evil of hasty eating, in which the food is not sufficiently masticated, and hence enters the stomach without being properly insalivated and comminuted. Besides the deleterious mechanical effect, tachyphagia also encourages the taking of large quantities of food in too short a time, as well as its consumption too hot or too cold.

The rising generation is going to fight tachyphagia tooth and nail—especially tooth. It is being taught wisely and well by the disciples of the Cookery and Food Association how to improve the family digestion, and there is an old saying to the effect that digestion is the business of the cook, indigestion that of the doctor. It cannot be too often or too forcibly impressed upon the so-called working-classes, and upon a good many other classes of society also, that good cooking does not mean waste and extravagance, but, on the contrary, that it connotes economy and frugality. A daughter who can cook well is tantamount to possessing a Savings-Bank account.

Are you a Euphagist? Perhaps, like the immortal M. Jourdain, of Molière, you may



have been one all your life—and never knew it. Anyhow, it is a question which is being bandied about at dinners just now a good deal, and as very few people know what a Euphagist really is, it may be as well to explain. Briefly then, Euphagists are the modern exponents of the old adage, “Laugh and grow fat.” As a sect, or a race, or a cult, or whatever they may please to call themselves, they refuse to take anything seriously at meal-times, which is an entirely sound and philosophical theory.

The learned German professor above referred to is the inventor, or discoverer, or resuscitator of the idea, and his doctrine is summed up in the brief instruction: Bite everything twenty times, don't worry whilst eating, laugh at everything—and acquire sound health. After all, it is a tried truism that there is no digestive as efficacious as hearty laughter. A solemn diner, especially if he dine often alone, is almost invariably dyspeptic; whereas a bright, cheery man or woman, who has a keen sense of humour, and sees the comic side of most things, is rarely a sufferer from indigestion.



“Even our digestion is governed by angels,” said William Blake, the artist-poet, and (if you will but resist the trivial inclination to substitute “bad angels”) is there really any greater mystery than the process by which beef is turned into brains, and jam into beauty?

Of course we do not laugh enough—at the utmost we giggle unmusically. Listen to the conversation in general at any restaurant, or even any dinner party; you will rarely hear a really hearty laugh. It is as extinct as silver épergnes or peacock-pie.

It is told of an American dining at the Carlton one night that, struck by the comparative silence of all the diners, he asked one of the waiters: “Say, does nobody ever laugh here?” The reply came pat enough: “Yes, sir, I believe there have been one or two complaints about it lately.” Are we too solemn, or too dull, or too afraid of shocking our neighbours?

It was not always so. According to that delightful work, “The Household of Sir Thomas More”: “What rare sport we had with a mummary we called ‘The Triall



of Feasting.' Dinner and Supper were brought up before my Lord Chief Justice, charg'd with Murder. Their accomplices were Plum-pudding, Mince-Pye, Drunkenness, and such-like. Being condemned to hang by ye neck, I, who was Supper, stuf't out with I cannot tell you how manie pillows, began to call lustilie for a confessor, and on his stepping forthe, commenct a list of all ye fitts, convulsions, spasms, payns in ye head, and so forthe, I had inflicted on this one and t'other."

In those days, no doubt, they did not require to adopt the tenets of Euphagism, they were well enough without it. To-day, however, as a change, and a delightful one too, from the hundred and one food-fads which abound, a general adoption of Euphagism would seem to promise brighter meals, more fun, and better health.

Among other aids to digestion which are flagrantly neglected is the taking of one's food in the open air whenever the thermometrical conditions of our somewhat erratic climate render it possible.

Just exactly why we take every oppor-



tunity of dining in the open air when we are abroad, and carefully fight shy of it, under more or less similar circumstances, when we are at home, is one of those questions which are unsolved, and apparently unsolvable. Our distaste for British coal may be one answer to the conundrum, and another may be not unconnected with our national shyness at being seen eating our meals in public by our fellow-countrymen. Foreigners, of course, don't count. Opportunity is not lacking, in London at any rate, for open-air dining. It can be done at several of the hotels, and in the summer there is Earl's Court, where, despite certain obvious drawbacks of access and other things, it can be enjoyed without much discomfort.

But these are, after all, only town delights, and not comparable to a dinner on a July evening in the open air in the country. One such lingers most pleasantly in my memory. It was at a charming house in Hampshire. We dined on a marble terrace, on which soft rugs had been placed. The night was still enough for the candles on the table to burn without guttering. Below the terrace



was a rose-garden, full of bloom, and in a shrubbery, not too close to the house, a Hungarian band played discreetly. The dinner, according to my recollection, was not extraordinarily good, but whatever it may have been, the surroundings, the *mise en scène*, were such that almost anything would have been appetizing and delightful. Why cannot more of this sort of thing be done? We cannot all possess marble terraces, rose-gardens, and Hungarian bands; but the permutations of the idea are innumerable, and I beg to present it to summer hostesses for development and improvement.

Exigencies of climate will probably never permit us to realize the *al fresco* meals suggested by a Watteau, a Boucher, or a Fragonard, and it is, indeed, more than questionable whether the French cuisine, which was flourishing round and about that period, was ever designed for the *diner sur l'herbe*, which is, and was, an essentially bourgeois meal.

At any rate, a curious old book in four volumes, "Les Soupers de la Cour; ou L'Art de Travailler toutes sortes d'Alimens,"



by Menon, which was published in Paris *au Lys d'Or* in 1755, contains many appallingly long menus, some comprising five services and forty or more dishes, expressly designed to be eaten out of doors. No less an authority than Carême, however, says that these menus (and they are certainly extraordinarily elaborate) were the result of pure imagination on the part of *feu* M. Menon, and were never actually carried out.

In our days even our shooting lunches tend to greater extent than can usefully be accommodated on the grass; and we are accordingly bidden to a farm-house, a tent, or sometimes a garnished barn. The lunch under a hedge, unloaded from the pony and spread temptingly on the grass, is almost a thing of the past, which, according to some old-fashioned fogies, is a pity.

Be that as it may, there is one open-air lunch which can never be altogether improved away. That is the river lunch, either in a punt or a skiff, with a table deftly made of the sculls and the stretchers. Moreover, it has this inestimable advantage: it is practically impossible for more than two to



partake of a boat lunch with comfort. It can, of course, be done, but at a sacrifice of leg room—and other things. Of course the more dignified motor-launch lunches, served at a real table, do not count, for are they not the same as those eaten on dry land?

It was, I think, the late Sir William Vernon Harcourt who once remarked that “we are all Socialists now.” By the same token we may say to-day, “We are all motorists now,” and really, taking it by and large, the luncheon part of a motor trip is by no means the least interesting.

That British hotels, with very few exceptions, leave much to be desired is the tritest of truisms. Bad cookery, shocking attendance, and old-fashioned appointments, combined with disproportionate expense, are almost universal, and a big fortune awaits any Boniface who, with a good house on a much-frequented road, instals a really good cook, preferably a Frenchman and his wife, not necessarily a high-priced individual, and makes a speciality of well-cooked, daintily served, appetizing lunches and dinners.

We have all met, only too frequently, the



miserable sham lamb, which is mere mutton saucily disguised with mint ; the nearly raw cold beef ; the maltreated chop ; the apologetic steak ; the absurd parody of a salad ; the sad and heavy apple tart ; and the anything but real Cheddar cheese. All these things are absurd and quite unnecessary.

It is really just as easy to cook a good dinner as a bad one. *Experto crede.*

The usual alternative for the foregoing bill of fare is a cheap and nasty imitation of a French menu, where nothing is true to name, and only the frills on the cutlets are what they pretend to be. It really should not be difficult to give a well-cooked fillet of sole, a tender chicken, an omelet *aux fines herbes*, and a dish of vegetables in season, *sautés au beurre* ; but if you asked for a lunch of this sort at a wayside British inn you would be put down at once as a lunatic. Why ?

The question of packing a motor lunch is one of some difficulty and niceness. Personally, I do not for one moment believe in those elaborate ready-fitted baskets, of which the makers are so inordinately proud. Such a basket seldom fits the lunch, and I



find by experience that a good-sized empty basket of convenient shape is far more practical.

The cutlery, glass, and china may be fixed, as a matter of convenience, although I do not consider even that to be necessary, for in packing up one is always trying to fit a table-knife into the place made for a teaspoon.

My ideal basket or hamper is quite bare inside (to begin with), and the cates, bottles, knives, forks, and spoons are packed therein, tightly and carefully, so as to prevent shaking and rattling.

A good method of keeping a salad fresh and crisp, by the way, is to hollow out a loaf of bread, cut off a slice at the top in the form of a lid, and pack the salad inside. Japanese paper serviettes are useful ; little and big cardboard plates and dishes are to be bought for a trifle ; fruit travels best if surrounded with green leaves ; Devonshire cream in pots is an appreciable luxury ; coffee can be made in the *cafetière gourmet*, if boiling water be handy. And, lastly, don't forget the corkscrew !

According to the calendar, spring begins



officially on 21 March. But the *restaurateurs* can beat Dame Nature, who, presumably, edits the calendar (another lady's paper!), by at least six weeks. For the season of *primeurs* commences six weeks earlier, and coming before their time, they are appreciated all the more for their vernal suggestion of the flavour of the real thing, arriving in due season when all the world and his wife may eat thereof.

Early green peas, for instance, which have hitherto been imported from Algiers, come from Nice, also the famous *Lauris* giant asparagus, white and succulent. This earliest open-air asparagus, of indubitable excellence, is to be had at about thirty-eight to forty-five shillings per bundle of fifty heads. It is worth the price.

Now too is the time to eat the real Pauillac lamb, reared on the salt marshes of Pauillac, young, fat, white, and so luscious that it melts in the mouth. The whole young lamb barely weighs fourteen pounds, and a cut of this veritable *pré salé*, so often badly imitated and misnamed, is worth a king's ransom.



But perpend when you order the dish at a restaurant. The *maître d'hôtel* will recommend a leg, because it has the better appearance; the knowledgeable diner, however, will inevitably prefer the shoulder, which is the quintessence of delicacy.

According to M. Roche, of Duke Street, Adelphi, the greatest authority on *primeurs* in London, early spring is the time beyond all others to indulge in the toothsome *crêtes de coq*, or cockscombs, without which no self-respecting dish *à la financière* is complete. The *haricots verts gris*, from Spain, are also in excellent condition. They are not much to look at, but the flavour is just exquisite. They cost about three shillings a pound.

The far-famed *poulet du Mans* and equally attractive *poularde de Bresse* are on the market at about twelve and sixpence each, but there is, I regret to say, a deal of fiction attending the appearance of these plump and pleasing birds on the usual London restaurant bill of fare. Either of them forms an imposing line on the menu, but see that you get the *real* French bird, and not the ordinary Surrey barn-door fowl, which,



however good in its way—and I should be the last to underrate the product of my own county—is of distinctly inferior flavour compared with its better-bred Gallic cousin.

The timely *primeurs* in the way of salads are numerous: the *mâche* is in excellent condition, and so is the *barbe de capucin*, duly blanched in cellars; the *Chicorée de Bruxelles* is a welcome change; and although the *romaine* at one and sixpence each are expensive, they are large-hearted and good of their kind.

The craze, however, for early vegetables may easily be overdone. A rather well-known gourmet, who has a place in the country, grows all his “early-out-of-the-season” stuff under glass. He was entertaining some friends in the month of May, and gave them very excellent new potatoes, boasting the while of their rarity. “My good man,” said a guest, “there is really nothing at all extraordinary in getting new potatoes in May, one can eat them anywhere.” But he had reckoned without his host. “Of course you can,” was the reply, “if you want *ordinary* new potatoes. These



of mine are early potatoes of *next* season but one ! ”

“ If I drink any more,” said Lady Coventry at Lord Hertford’s table, “ if I drink any more, I shall be *muckibus*.”

“ Lord ! ” said Lady Mary Coke, “ what is that ? ”

“ Oh,” was the reply, “ it is Irish for *sentimental*.”

This was dinner-table conversation one hundred and fifty years ago, *teste* Horace Walpole. They were franker in those days.

“ This wine,” said a notable host to one Mr. Pocock of Bristol, “ costs me six shillings a bottle.”

“ Does it,” asked the guest, with a quaint look of gay reproof ; “ then pass it round, and let me have another six penn’orth ! ”

In the eighteenth century, Sir Walter Besant tells us, people habitually ate and drank too much ; citizens and aldermen grew portentously fat ; well-bred people would gnaw bones with their fingers at public banquets ; an imperial quart of ale was a day’s ordinary allowance, and a man would drink his six bottles of port at a



sitting. Another illustration of a lusty appetite may be quoted from the Memoirs of Sir Walter Scott. He and his friend, Mr. Shortreed, on one of those Liddesdale raids when he was so brisk-hearted and jovial, rode over one morning from Clench-head to breakfast with Thomas Elliott of Tuzzliehope. Before starting at six o'clock, just to lay their stomachs, they had a couple of ducks and some London porter, and were, nevertheless, well disposed on their arrival at Tuzzliehope for a substantial breakfast, with copious libations of whisky punch, which did not in any degree incapacitate them, for they were able to pursue their journey, picking up fragments of border minstrelsy as they went along. And it was not only on country excursions that meat and drink were consumed *ad libitum*; the ordinary diet of the men of the period was what we would call redundant, and their feasts were Gargantuan. A dinner given by James Ballantyne on the birth-eve of a novel is thus described :—

The feast was gorgeous, an aldermanic display of turtles and venison with the



suitable accompaniments of iced punch, potent ale, and generous Madeira. When the cloth had been drawn and many toasts had been honoured and songs sung, the claret and olives made way for broiled bones and a mighty bowl of punch, and when a few glasses of the hot beverage had restored their powers, the guests were ready to listen to the new romance, read aloud by Ballantyne *ore rotundo*. A novel, under these circumstances, especially if of the somewhat lengthy and descriptive nature current at that period, must have been at once stimulating, satisfying, and soporific.

There is authority and to spare as to the comparative plethora of food which was piled on the table to incite, provoke and assuage the decidedly healthy appetites of our forbears. In No. 148 of "The Tatler," Addison writes :—

"At last I discovered, with some joy, a pig at the lower end of the table, and begged a gentleman that was near to cut me a piece of it. Upon which the gentleman of the house said with real civility : 'I am sure you will like the pig, for it was whipt to death.'"



In those days a sucking-pig was supposed to acquire greater succulence through flagellation. What with burning down a house (although only a Chinese one) to make roast pork, and flogging a baby, the pigs must have had rather a hard time. An eighteenth-century pig underwent various vicissitudes from which a twentieth-century pig is exempt.

Goethe has a story in his "Campaign in France" that, after a long and tiring fight, some of Prince Louis Ferdinand's soldiers looted a heavy locked-up kitchen-dresser, in which they heard something heavy rolling about. They concluded it was food, and as they were well-nigh famished they took it out to the camp and broke it open. To their horror and disgust, all it contained was a weighty cookery book. However, they made the best of a bad job, and as they had no supper, they sat round the camp fire and one man after the other read out a succulent receipt from the book, and thus they tried to pretend that they were enjoying a gorgeous supper. This is, indeed, the true spirit of appreciative gastronomy, and the table-



manners of these hungry but easily appeased warriors must have been the quintessence of simplicity and good taste. For, after all, a dinner in its diurnal regularity is the most perennial of delights. Bulwer Lytton, in "Pelham," says :—

"A buried friend may be replaced, a lost mistress renewed, a slandered character be recovered, even a broken constitution restored ; but a dinner once lost is irremediable ; that day is for ever departed ; an appetite once thrown away can never, till the cruel prolixity of the gastric agent is over, be regained. *Il y a tant de maîtresses* (says the admirable Corneille), *il n'y a qu'un diner.*"

Speaking of the close of the Tudor period, William Harrison, a contemporary historian, writes :—

"I might here talke somewhat of the great silence that is used at the tables of the honourable and wiser sorte generallie over all the realme (albeit that too much deserveth no commendation, for it belongeth to guests to be neither muti nor loquaces) likewise the moderate eating and drinking that is dailie seene, and finallie of the regard that each



hath to keepe himselfe from note of surfetting and drunkenesse (for which cause salt meat, except beefe, bacon, and porke, are not anie whit esteemed, and yet these three may be much powdered); but as in the rehearsal thereof I should commend the nobleman, merchant, and frugall artificer, so I could not cleare the meaner sort of husbandman of verie much bobbling (except it be here and there some odd yeoman) with whom he is thought to be merriest that talketh of most ribaldrie. . . .”

Very similar were the precepts taught to our remoter forefathers. In the “Accomplish’d Lady Rich’s Closet of Rareties, or Ingenious Gentlewoman’s Delightful Companion” (1653) ladies are told when carving at their own table to “distribute the best pieces first, and it will appear very comely and decent to use a fork.” The lady is also requested to sit at table “with a straight body,” and “*even though she were an aunt,*” to refrain from resting her elbows upon the table. She must not “by ravenous gesture display a voracious appetite,” and if “she talked with her mouth full, or smacked her



lips like a pig, or swallowed spoon meat so hot that tears came to her eyes, she would be taken for an underbred person, even if she were really an Earl's daughter." But folk were almost exaggeratedly delicate in those days. It is related by the worthy Dr. Walker in his "Sufferings of the Clergy" that a pious parish priest was ejected from his cure by the Commonwealth Puritans because he was formally accused of "eating custard scandalously." But the etiquette of the table dates back to the very earliest ages. Of the five hundred and sixty-five Chinese books on Behaviour, catalogued by a learned mandarin, no fewer than three hundred and sixty-one refer directly to the ceremonial of the Chinese dinner-table. It is remarkable too that among the Sybarites it was customary to invite ladies to dinner a year beforehand, ostensibly to give them time to beautify themselves.

In the year 1557 one Seager published his "Schoole of Vertue, a booke of good Nourture for Children," wherein the following instructions are set forth in rhyme.



## MRS. GRASSE AND HER HARE III

When thy parentes downe to the table shall syt,  
In place be ready for the purpose most fyt ;  
With sober countenance, lookynge them in the face,  
Thy hands holding up, thus begin Grace ;  
“ Geve thanks to God with one accorde  
For that shall be set on this borde,”  
And be not careful what to eate,  
To eche thyng lyvyng the Lord sends meate ;  
For foode he wyll not se you peryshe,  
But wyll you fede, foster and cheryshe ;  
Take well in worth what he hath sent  
At thys time be therewith content

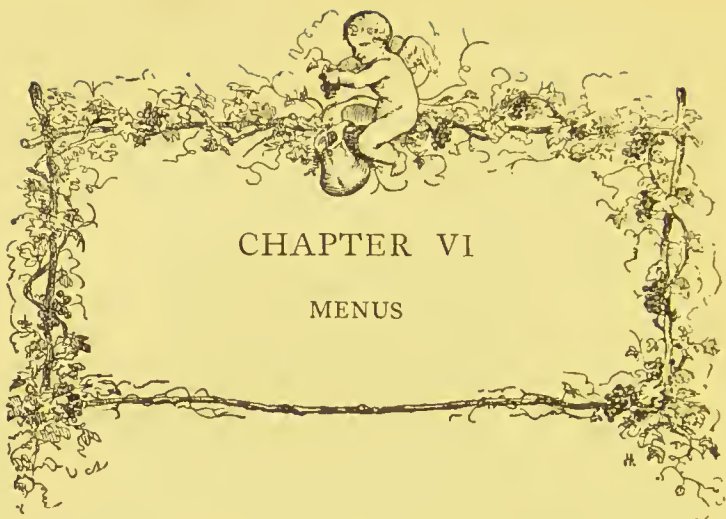
Praysinge God !

So treatable speakyng as possibly thou can,  
That the hearers thereof may thee understan,  
Grace beyng said, low cursie make thou,  
Sayinge “ much good may it do you.”

Finally, the following epitaph on a gourmand, written by an unknown poet, seems to sum up the true inwardness of the gastronomic ideal :—

Ci-gît un gourmand insigne  
Dont l'exercice le plus digne  
Fût de manger à tout propos.  
Se voyant reduit à l'extrême,  
Il aurait mangé la mort même ;  
Mais il n'y trouva que des os.





## CHAPTER VI

### MENUS

“I hope you’ll have all you’re thinkin’ you’re havin’ an’ more too,—but less if you’d like it.”

The Lunatic Lady in  
FRANK STOCKTON’S “Rudder Grange.”

ACCORDING to the old Greek authorities, the original Seven Sages of the kitchen were : Agris of Rhodes, who first taught the bone method of dressing fish ; Nereus of Corinth, who made the conger a dish for the gods ; Orion, who invented white sauce ; Chariades, who achieved yellow sauce ; Lampriadas, who discovered brown sauce ; Atlantis, who made the most perfect restorative ; and Euthynus, who cooked vegetables so exquisitely that he was named Lentillus.

These several gentlemen, combined into



one, would not be all too learned in the niceties of gastronomy to be able to put together a modern dinner menu. Nowadays we want something more than mere quantity. The Gargantuan repasts of our forefathers are not for us. In those days, maybe (or perhaps not), unlimited exercise, hunting, and the like made these gross meals comparatively digestible ; but we live in more delicate times, and want our viands fewer in number and more carefully cooked, with less added flavour and more of their own natural juices.

It is very true that one-half of the world does not know how the other half dines. We follow one another in sheep-like fashion round the few better-known restaurants, eating the same dinners, drinking the same wines, and seeing the same people week after week, in a dull monotony of sameness.

And yet there are a few quite nice, respectable, meetable sort of folk, who, with the cosmopolitan habit strong upon them, know their London well enough to be able to dine every night in a different country,



and remain all the time within a shilling cab-fare of Piccadilly.

How is it done, you will ask? It is really very simple.

Say you want a French dinner, light, delicate, and appetizing, go to Kettner, in Church Street, Soho, or to Dieudonné, in Ryder Street, and you will find *un petit diner très-fin*, as good as you will obtain anywhere in Paris. If you patronize the former very old and very quaint establishment, ask to look over the kitchens; they are as neat and clean as those in a painting by an old Dutch master. As to the menu, you cannot do better than leave yourself in the hands of the *maître d'hôtel*.

If you are inclined to dine *à l'Italienne*, go to Pagani's, in Great Portland Street, and order *Minestrone*; *Sôle à la Pagani*; *Pollio alla Contrabandista*, and macaroni; take plenty of Parmesan cheese with everything, and imagine yourself in Florence. Do not forget to drink the special *Lacrima Christi*, and inspect the "autograph-room" on the second floor.

Again, suppose you desire to spend a



Teutonic evening and regale yourself on German delicacies. Hie then to the old Gambrinus, in Regent Street, run by the excellent Oddenino of the Imperial. Call the *Ober Kellner* and *bestell* yourself *Fleisch Brühe*, *Karpfe in Bier*, *Kalbskotlette mit Celeri salat*, and *Dampfnudeln*. As the American critic remarked : "If you like that sort of thing that's just the sort of thing you'll like."

I have lunched Turkishly in the City off *Kabobs*, kid stuffed with pistachio, and most excellent rice-milk and cinnamon. There used to be a Spanish restaurant in Soho, where they gave you *Escudella*, *Estofado*, and the world-renowned *Gaspacho* ; but I rather think that this place came to an untimely end, owing to lack of patronage. Many Russian dishes, such as *Bortsch*, *Blinis*, *Koulbiac*, and *Shtshi*, are to be met with on the ordinary menus of the best restaurants ; and the Swedish *Smorgasbord*, or exaggerated *Zakouska* of the Russians, is occasionally put before one as *hors d'œuvre à la Suédoise*, which is, of course, quite wrong, because the real thing ought to be eaten standing up at a



side-table, and not sitting down at the dinner-table. However, these are the necessary tributes to convention.

“*Œufs à la coque!* Of course not! I want hens’ eggs, ordinary barn-door fowls’. What silly people these foreigners are!”

The average Englishman travelling abroad has really not got much beyond that stage of insular and ignorant prejudice. But why should he go abroad at all, when here in his native London he can, if he so desires, get a dinner cooked after (sometimes very much after) the fashion of almost any country in the world?

A dining tour in London, covering the cuisines of a score of different nationalities, is not difficult, and, moreover, it is vastly instructing. Properly approached, the cooks will be found to be only too glad to show what they can do in serving dishes of their own homeland. They appreciate the compliment of being asked to illustrate their national bill of fare, and, as practically everything can be procured in London, it is an interesting experiment to spend ten days in



dining in foreign countries — and going home to one's own bed every night.

Do you wish to cross that ridiculously disappointing ocean called the Atlantic and try an American dinner? Come with me to the Criterion and instruct the American chef to prepare the dinner on the lines shown below :—

Chicken Okra. Clam Broth.  
 Salt Cod and Hash. Oyster Fritters.  
 Mixed Turkey and Corn.  
 Stuffed Red Peppers.  
 Terrapin Maryland. Chipped Beef.  
 Scalloped Sweet Potatoes. Cold Slaw.  
 Graham Pudding.  
 New England Indian Pudding.  
 Temperance Punch.

This programme calls for little explanation. The okra cooked with the chicken gives it a peculiar and quite delicious flavour. The clam is a dulcet combination of the oyster, the mussel, and the scallop.

One of the most valuable products of the United States (gastronomically speaking), the terrapin must be eaten to be believed.



It must also be specially imported. It is a species of turtle—but even more so—and quite exquisite in its subtlety. New England Indian pudding, according to the recipe of Mrs. Henry W. Blair, wife of the now or former Senator for New Hampshire, is compounded as follows :—

Two quarts of milk, one cup of meal, one cup of molasses, half a cup of sugar, one teaspoonful of salt, one teaspoon of cinnamon or ginger, two eggs. Heat one quart of milk, milk-warm, then slowly stir in the meal, and keep stirring gently until it thickens, but does not quite boil. Remove from the stove and add the molasses, sugar, salt, and spice. Then beat the eggs well and stir them in. Pour into the pudding-dish, remove the mixing-spoon, and turn the second quart of milk in. Send immediately to the oven without mixing, and cook steadily for five hours.

There are a dozen Chinese restaurants in London, but they are in the East—the very far East—and you must make paradoxically for the West India Dock Road and then inquire of a policeman—who probably will not know. This Chinese menu given is a typical one.



MENU

- Bow Ha Mai. (Boiled Prawns in Oil.)  
 Chow Chop Sucy. (Bits of Pork Chops.)  
     Ham ob Dan.  
 (Preserved Eggs with Ducks' Gizzards.)  
     Ob Gan Bow Vo Toway.  
     (Ducks' Livers and Boiled Ham.)  
     Chow Ju Aw. (Boiled Pork.)  
     Bow Ny Gwei. (Cuttle Fish.)  
     Yen Wo Gong.  
 (Pigeon Eggs and Birds' Nest Soup.)  
     Bow Hai. (Boiled Crabs.)  
     Yuen Tsyai. (Rice Cakes.)  
 Bow Ob. (Duck Tongues and Mushrooms.)  
     Ju Tow Ny Gow.  
 (Fried Roofs of the Mouths of Pigs.)  
     Chow ob Jun. (Ducks' Feet.)  
     Lein Chi Gong. (Lily-seed Soup.)  
     Hong Yin Gong. (Almond Soup.)  
     Dein Som. (Sweetmeats.)  
     Yueh Biung. (Mincemeat.)  
     Gwoy Zoo. (Fruits.)  
     Kwoh Zuh. (Seeds.)  
 Cha Sam Soo. (Tea and Rice Whisky.)

From China to Japan is not a far cry, but  
 I fear you cannot dine Japanesily in the  
 East ; you must come West, and even then



engage a special cook from the Legation or the Japanese Club. Still it is to be done, and this menu gives a series of titbits which are in themselves most appetizing. You may feel inclined afterwards to go elsewhere and eat a chop, but that is not the fault of the Japanese cuisine, but of your own large appetite.

## MENU

- Luimano. (Fish Soup.)
- Shira. (Bean Soup.)
- Ohira. (Vegetable Soup.)
- Sashimi. (Raw Sliced Fish.)
- Nizakana. (Boiled Fish.)
- Teriyaki. (Roast Fish.)
- Shiwoyaki. (Roast Fish.)
- Muchitori. (Vegetables.)
- Umani. (Fish and Vegetables.)
- Trubonomoni. (Vegetables.)
- Gozen. (Rice.)
- Tsukemono. (Pickles.)
- Shoyu. (Sauce.)
- Saki.

In Scandinavian restaurants, which are to be found in the neighbourhood of the docks, where Danes, Swedes, and Norwegian sailors mostly congregate, the food is quite



excellent. Simple, well cooked, and very toothsome. The Swedish menu which I have given is not, of course, the sort of dinner that a Dalarne peasant would get, but the sort of thing that, if you give proper notice, can be prepared for you by a knowledgeable Scandinavian cook.

MENU

Kraftor. (Crayfish.)  
 Korvel Soppa. (Chervil Soup.)  
 Kokt Halmstad Lax. (Boiled Salmon.)  
 Stekt Sjotunga. (Roasted Soles.)  
 Kalfbrass Arter.  
 (Stewed Veal and Peas.)  
 Brytbonor. (Broad Beans.)  
 Farska Carotter. (Fresh Carrots.)  
 Kyckling. (Chicken.)  
 Ungorre.  
 Tomatsallad.  
 Blandad Fruvt. (Fruit Salad.)  
 Jordgubbar. (Strawberries.)  
 Glacemarenger. (Ice Pudding.)

For those who do not object to oil and garlic there is much that is attractive in the Spanish cuisine. There is only one place—as yet—in London where a real Spanish



dinner is to be had, and then it must be specially ordered; but there are several Spanish chefs who, on persuasion, can be bribed to cook a dinner on the lines indicated.

### MENU

Entremeses variados. (Hors d'œuvre.)

Sopa. (Soup.)

Ostras a la Espanola. (Oysters.)

Pescado Chambord. (Fish.)

Pichones a la Provenzal.

Jamon y Pavo con Jalea de Grosellas.

(Ham and Gooseberry Jelly.)

Salomillo de ternera con trufas.

Ensalada. (Salad.)

Esparragos. (Asparagus.)

Quesos Variados. (Sweets.)

The Italian style of cookery must not be judged by the examples of it in the thousands of cheap restaurants scattered throughout London. As a matter of fact they are mostly run by Swiss, either French-Swiss, German-Swiss, Italian-Swiss, or Swiss-Swiss. The real Italian style of feeding is quite excellent, and at most of the best West End restaurants they have at least one



Italian cook, who, if the dinner be intelligently ordered, will be only too delighted to show his skill.

MENU

Antipasto.  
 Vermicelli al Brodo.  
 Minestrone alla Milanaise.  
 Rombo, salsa Olandese.  
 Gnocchi alla Piemontese.  
 Medaglione di Manso all' Italiana.  
 Patate Novelle.  
 Anitra arrosto.  
 Insalata.  
 Pere al Nebiolo.  
 Gelato alla Vaniglia.

There is an Indian restaurant in Stafford Street which appeals to all Anglo-Indians—and to many others who appreciate a real curry, either dry or wet, Madras, Ceylon, Bombay, or any other style. The menu as follows can be cooked to perfection, and it is quite quaint to be greeted by white-robed, blue-turbaned attendants with a polite “Salaam, sahib !” They make good waiters, too ; silent, quick, and deft.



## MENU

- Bhurta. (Hors d'œuvre.)  
Shorwa. (Soup.)  
Muchee Salna. (Fish Curry.)  
Hulvan Kabbab. (Lamb Cutlets.)  
Teeter Pallow. (Partridge Pilaff.)  
Subzie Chichkey. (Vegetable Curry.)  
Mithau. (Sweets.)  
Meva. (Fruit.)  
Kava. (Coffee.)

Where so many are good it would be invidious to say which is the best German restaurant in London, and it would also be a gross mistake to imagine that a German dinner is all sauerkraut and sausage. On the contrary, good German cookery (whether north or south) is as good as in any other part of Europe, and in some respects better. It can be sampled in several German restaurants in London. I would advise all visitors at a German restaurant to try the Prinz Pückler, an ice-pudding, which may be singled out as being especially worthy of imitation.

About French cookery there is nothing new to be said, because every one knows—or



ought to know—that when it is good it is very good indeed, and when it is bad—it is horrid. In London it is not difficult to obtain examples both of the good and the horrid French styles. The horrid will not be needed twice! The real cuisine bourgeoise, which does not attempt to disguise the true flavour of the meats with unholy sauces, is nearly the very best in the world.

Last, but not least, of all, in all probability best of all, is a real English menu, and it is really difficult to say where it may best be ordered, for the *maître d'hôtel* of a big restaurant looks askance at a bill of fare without one single French word in it, not even an *à la*.

A dear lady whose wit was better than her French pronunciation once said at a little dinner, “It is not so much the menu that matters, as the men you sit next to.” And really the programme is not by any means as important as the cooking thereof.

Old-fashioned Christmas cookery was, no doubt, of a heavier and more serious nature



than ours of to-day, although the compound-  
ing of the historic plum-pudding seems to  
have been much the same. Here is the  
recipe of Mr. Richard Briggs, "many years  
cook at the Globe Tavern, the White Hart,  
and now at the Temple Coffee House." It  
appears in his "English Art of Cookery,"  
published in 1788 :—

Take a pound of flour, and mix it into batter  
with half a pint of milk; beat up the yolks of  
eight and the whites of four eggs, a pound of beef  
suet shred fine, a pound of raisins picked, a pound  
of currants, washed and picked, half a nutmeg  
grated, a teaspoonful of beaten ginger, a little  
moist sugar, a glass of brandy, and a little lemon-  
peel shred fine. Mix it well together, tie it up in  
a cloth, and boil it four hours. When it is done,  
turn it out into a dish, and garnish with powder  
sugar, with melted butter, sweet wine and sugar,  
mixed in a boat.

This is a curious recipe, which, I think,  
might work out very well. My copy of this  
old book bears the following quaint inscrip-  
tion on the fly-leaf: "The gift of Andrew  
Newton, Esquire, to the Dean and Chapter  
of Lichfield for the use of the Library of that



Cathedral." What *can* the Dean and Chapter have wanted with a cookery book?

"You can't please everybody," as the old fisherman remarked to the grumbling angler who brought up a red-herring at the end of his line, and there are doubtless some—many, maybe—who prefer a less seasonable dinner than the stereotyped Christmas meal. For such this dainty and simple menu is humbly suggested:—

Potage poule au pot Henri IV.

Merlans à la Bretonne.

Filet de Bœuf à la Provençale.

Chapons du Mans rôtis.

Ragout de truffes.

Fonds d'Artichauts demi-glace.

Bombe Chantilly.

As a matter of fact, this was the dinner given a short while ago in Paris by the *Société des Amis des Livres*, who know as much about cookery as they do about bookery. It is worthy of record for its simplicity and completeness.

For those who like to be thoroughly conventional, and yet at the same time to let sweet reasonableness attend their feasts, let



me recommend a Christmas dinner fashioned on somewhat the following lines :—

Consommé with Italian paste.

Oyster soup.

Turbot, Hollandaise sauce with capers.

Brill and Tartare sauce.

Turkey stuffed with chestnuts or fresh truffles.

Fillet of beef, horse-radish sauce.

Soufflé of fowl.

Westphalian goose breast with winter spinach.

Stewed celery.

Plum pudding, brandy sauce.

Mince pies.

Chartreuse of oranges.

Welsh rabbit.

Devilleb biscuit.

This is a special Christmas dinner prepared by the late Sir Henry Thompson, whose views on food and feeding are well known. It is most certainly a very happy combination of the necessities and the delicacies of the season, and as such needs no further recommendation. It is perhaps especially applicable to country-house parties, where both sexes are wont to have a pretty appetite.

“Science can analyse a pork chop, and



say how much of it is phosphorus and how much is protein, but science cannot analyse any man's wish for a pork chop, and say how much of it is hunger, how much nervous fancy, how much a haunting love of the beautiful. The man's desire for the pork chop remains literally as mystical and ethereal as his desire for heaven." Now, who wrote that ingenuous passage? *Je vous le donne en trois*. Charles Lamb? No. G. A. Sala? No. Mr. Lecky? Certainly not! It is by that inimitable humorist, G. K. Chesterton. And it's quite true.

There is a most delectable little part of the turkey which the French euphoniously call *le sot l'y laisse*. Grimod de la Reynière, the celebrated gourmet, was wont to say that it was the most exquisite morsel of flesh in the world.

Travelling one day some miles from his country-seat, he pulled up at a roadside inn for dinner. The host regretted that he had nothing to offer the stranger. "But," said the latter, "I see five turkeys hanging up there. Why not give me one of them?" The innkeeper was sorry, but they were all



ordered by a gentleman staying in the house. "Surely he cannot want them all himself. Ask him to permit me to share his meal." Again the innkeeper had to refuse. The gentleman in question was very particular. He only ate one tiny little piece from each bird—*le sot l'y laisse*, in fact. More anxious than ever to know who this rival gourmet was who had the same tastes as himself, de la Reynière insisted on making his acquaintance. He found it was his own son.

This is the menu of the Queen's Guard Dinner, St. James's Palace, for Friday, 23 March, 1855. Considering that it is only fifty years old, and therefore well within the memory of many living men, it makes curiously quaint reading.

#### MENU

Les Huîtres.

Potage à la Crécy aux croûtons.

Potage de Macaroni au consommé.

La Merluche sauce aux œufs.

Les truites grillées à la Tartare.

Saddle of Mutton.

Les Poulets garnis d'une langue.



Les Côtelettes de mouton à la Soubise.  
 Le vol au vent aux écrevisses.  
 Les Kromeskys de ris de veau.  
 Les filets de bœuf piqués sauce poivrade.  
 Les pigeons and la pintade piquée.  
 Les Pommes au riz.  
 Les fondus en caisses.  
 La gelée-au noyau.  
 Les meringues à la Chantilly.  
 Les Epinards au jus.  
 La moëlle aux croûtons.

Such a deal of fine, confused feeding would be deemed vulgar and ostentatious to-day. The dinner could not have been served and eaten in less than a couple of hours, and there is an appalling ponderosity of substantials which must have tried the mid-Victorian digestion to the uttermost.

In pleasing contrast to the foregoing, I will quote a charming little dinner given in Paris by a hostess who understands the art of menu-fashioning in the highest degree.



## MENU

Huîtres de Marennes.  
Potage Bonne Femme.  
Filets de Soles Joinville.  
Selle d'agneau bouquetière.  
Salmis de bécasses aux truffes.  
Foie gras à la Souwaroff.  
Poulardes à la Parisienne.  
Cœurs de laitues à la Russe.  
Pointes d'asperges à la crème.  
Glace Lavallière.  
Gauffrettes.

Few people know why an extra thick fillet of beef is called a *Chateaubriand*, and fewer still know how it ought to be cooked. You may ask all the chefs in town, and it is about thirty-three to one against your getting any historically precise information on the subject.

The story of the matter is briefly this. The dish was first cooked in the year 1802 at Champeaux Restaurant, in the Place de la Bourse. It was just at the period when Chateaubriand published his most brilliant



work, "Le Génie du Christianisme." "The profane wits of the kitchen" thought that a good steak sent to the fire between two malefactor steaks was a fair parody of the title of the book. The fillet or steak was cut so thick that by the ordinary method of cooking it might be burned on the surface whilst quite raw inside, and therefore—although the original and authentic method is ignored nowadays—it was put upon the fire between two other slices of beef, which, if burned, could be thrown away. Thus only is the Chateaubriand properly cooked.

The title has really nothing to do with the garnishing or the sauce, although the average *maître d'hôtel* will insist otherwise. Nevertheless the true story is as above. Chateaubriand was French Ambassador at the Court of St. James in 1822.

It may be of interest to put on record here His Majesty the King's Derby Day dinner at Buckingham Palace to the members of the Jockey Club. Here it is :—



## MENU

Tortue Claire.

Crème de Pois Comtesse.

Whitebait au Naturel et à la Diable.

Suprêmes de Truites à la Valenciennes.

Zéphires de Cailles à la Montagne.

Hanches de Venaison, Sauce Aigredoux.

Selle d'Agneau froide à la Niçoise.

Pommes de Terre à la Jaucourt.

Ortolans Rôtis.

Poussins sur Canapés.

Salade de Cœurs de Romaines.

Asperges d'Argenteuil, Sauce Mousseline.

Pêches à la Reine Alexandra.

Pâtisseries à la Parisienne.

Cassolettes à la Jockey Club.

Petites Glaces Printanières.

Friandises.

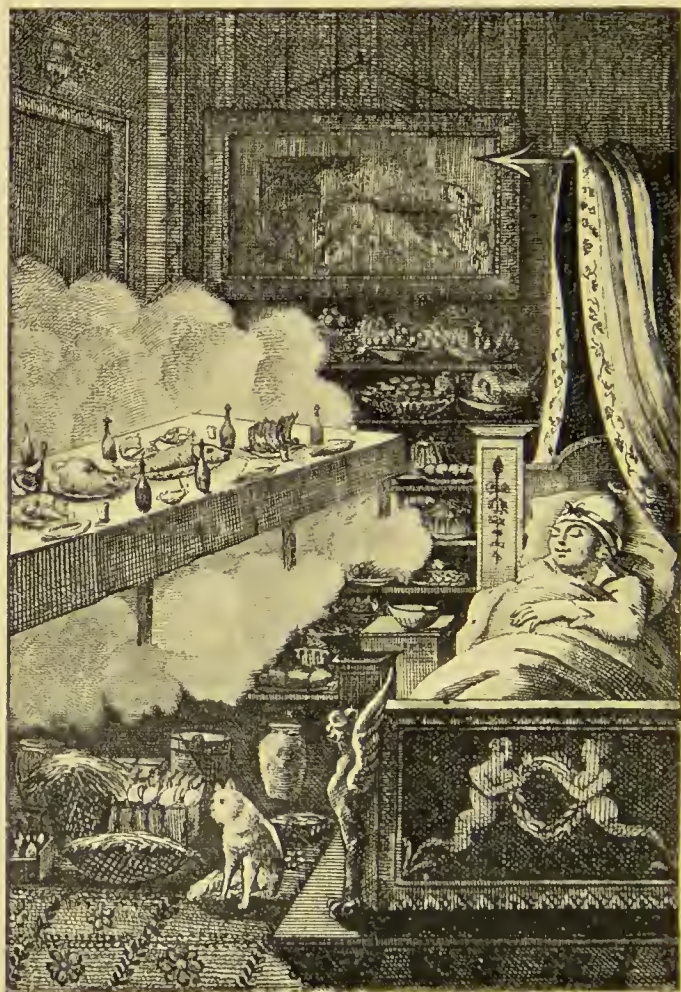
Dessert.

From trustworthy accounts I am constrained to believe that royal banquets are like many other mundane things. They look well, they read well, possibly they taste well, but there is inevitably the sub-acid flavour of Dead Sea apples, and the thoughtful observer may echo Talleyrand's remark









LES RÊVES D'UN GOURMAND

(A. B. L. Grimod de la Reynière inv. 1808)

[To face page 135]



that whenever he perused a royal menu his thoughts involuntarily turned to *pot-au-feu*.

Although some kings (and queens too) were undoubtedly valiant trenchermen (and women), yet it is an ascertained fact that the more luxury appears on the bill of fare, the more frugal is the repast of majesty. The third Napoleon, towards the end of his reign, was forced to be so abstemious that, when the most tempting *plats* jostled one another on his table, he found himself obliged to dine off a cutlet and a cup of rice.

Nowadays it is said that guests at a royal banquet refuse the most artistic creations, and ask boldly for a cut of mutton.

However this may be, it can be taken for granted that royal banquets are much like other meals in so far as anticipation, appetite, realization, and digestion are concerned. The great Carême resigned his position as *Maître de Bouche* to George IV, after only a few weeks' service, and at an honorarium of one thousand guineas a year (guineas, mark you, there speaks the artist!), because



His Majesty showed no appreciation of his finest efforts, but was continually asking for boiled beef.

Nevertheless, the royal cooks always rise to the occasion, as the following interesting document will show. The chef at Windsor in 1858 was M. Pierre Mouret. This is the menu of the wedding dinner of the (then) Crown Prince of Prussia, father of the present Kaiser, to our own Princess Royal, given by Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle on 18 January, 1858.

## MENU

### HER MAJESTY'S DINNER

#### *Potages.*

A la Tortue. A la Jardinière.  
Crème de riz à la Reine.

#### *Poissons.*

Saumons bouillis. Turbots bouillis.  
Filets de sole frits.

#### *Relevés.*

Pièces de Bœuf braisées, garnies de légumes.  
Chapons truffés à la Périgueux.



*Entrées.*

Kromeskis de Crevettes.  
 Ris de Veau piqués à la Macédoine.  
 Timbales de Macaroni à la Milanaise.  
 Côtelettes de Mouton à la purée de haricots.  
 Petites Croustades à la purée de volaille.  
 Côtelettes de Poulets à la Tartare.  
 Perdreaux à la financière.  
 Quenelles de Lièvre garnies d'escalopes.

*Contre-flancs.*

Poulets à la royale.

*Rôts.*

Bécasses. Poulardes.

*Relevés.*

Gâteaux de Compiègne. Poires au riz.  
 Puddings de gingembre.

*Entremets.*

Epinards au velouté. Œufs brouillés aux truffes.  
 Salade de Volaille. Aspic de Galantine.  
 Biscuits et plombière.  
 Dauphines à la fleur d'orange.  
 Gelée de Vanille. Blanc-manger rubané.

*Buffet.*

Sirloins of Beef. Saddles of Mutton.  
 Haunches of Venison.



Among the cleverest and most *spirituel* of *menus d'occasion* is that of a French-Italian *déjeuner* at the Carlton Hotel, composed, arranged, and designed by M. Escoffier.

## MENU

## L'ITALIE ET LA FRANCE À TABLE

F	ritot d'œufs à la Verd	I
R	ouget de roche à la Loube	T
A	mourettes a'agneau à la Tosc	A
N	onnettes de poulet Agnès Sore	L
C	èpes à la Rossin	I
E	ugénie crème Italienn	E

The double acrostic is most skilfully introduced, and the lunch, as such, is quite a little work of art.

In the columns of the "Academy," some little while ago, an ingenious contributor elaborated a menu without the use of a single French word. It is doubtful, however, whether it will ever come into the realms of practical gastronomic usage. It ran thus :—



MENU

(Old style, obsolete)

Hors d'œuvres.  
 Pot au Feu.  
 Purée de petits pois.  
 Bouchées aux Huîtres.  
 Chaud-froid de Saumon.  
 Vol-au-vent de Volaille.  
 Petits Filets mignons à la  
     Maître d'Hotel.  
 Noix de Veau à la  
     Jardinière.  
 Pommes de terre sautées.  
 Asperges en branches:  
     Sauce Mousseline.  
 Timbales de Fruits.  
 Crème renversée.  
 Petits Soufflés de Foie  
     gras.

BILL OF FARE

(New style)

Raw Bits.  
 Pot on the Fire.  
 Mash of Little Peas.  
 Mouthfuls of Oysters.  
 Hot-cold of Salmon.  
 Fowl Fly-to-Wind.  
 "Ducksy" little Fillets  
     to the Butler.  
 Nut of Veal in the way  
     of the Gardener's  
     wife.  
 Jumped Potatoes.  
 Asparagus in branches;  
     Muslin Sauce.  
 Mugs of Fruit.  
 Turned-up Cream.  
 Little Blow-outs of fat  
     Liver.

Such a meal as this, to be thoroughly appreciated, would no doubt have to be prepared by a Chief or a Blue Cord.

A purely English dinner, however, is not so difficult to describe in plain straightforward language. Such a one, for instance,



as the Festival Dinner of the Royal Society  
of St. George, which ran thuswise :—

Appetizers.

Imperial “Clear” Soup.

Boiled Hampshire Salmon and Cucumber.

Thames Whitebait devilled.

Norfolk Sweetbreads

and Truffles.

THE ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND

(Devon Baron).

Yorkshire Pudding.

English New Potatoes and Beans.

Royal Navy Iced Punch.

Roast Buckinghamshire Duckling and

Apple Sauce.

Peas. Lettuce Salad.

Colchester Asparagus.

Braised Berkshire Ham.

Trafalgar Pudding.

Colonial Ice Pudding.

Dessert.

Coffee.

The menu of a Japanese luncheon given  
by the Mikado at Tokio makes curious  
reading, although I am assured that its  
purely local features are assuaged by a  
leaven of European delicacies.



MENU

Suimono (Soup).  
 Night Heron and Shimeji (a species of  
 Champignon).  
 Kuchitori (Hors d'Œuvres).  
 Wild Duck.  
 Awabi (Haliotis, etc).  
 Iashami (uncooked Fish).  
 Tai, Kawatsukuri and Arai (two modes  
 of preparing uncooked Fish).  
 Sunomono (Mixed Salad).  
 Iced Whale and Mustard Sauce.  
 Yakimono (Entrées).  
 Baked Ai Fish (chawaninushi Eel Soup).  
 Fried Chicken and String Beans.  
 Anago and Imo (a species of Eel and  
 Potato).  
 Rice Soup and Quail.  
 Pickles.      Cake.  
 Fruit.

A friend has sent me a curiosity from Havana in the shape of a menu, into the composition of every dish of which the banana entered in some shape or form. As a triumph of skill and ingenuity I respect the menu, but am thankful that I was not



invited to partake of the repast. Here it is.

### MENU

Soupe à la Banane avec Croûtons de Banane.

Crêpes de Banane avec Gelée de Banane.

Poulets à l'Étuvée avec Bananes Ciselées.

Poulets Rôtis avec Bananes Dressées.

Rôti de Bœuf avec Gelée de Banane.

Gâteau à la Gelée de Banane.

Galettes de Bananes.

Gâteau de Banane aux Fruits.

Café de Banane.

The subjoined menu is a quaint attempt to please adult lovers of "Alice in Wonderland," and deserves notice in that it really does contain a number of references, more or less apt, to that perennially delightful work.

### MENU

*Hors d'œuvres.*

Huîtres, Larmes Amères.

Snickersnacks.

*Potages.*

Manxommé.

Jabberwock's-tail.



*Poisson.*

Walrus à la Charpentier.  
Snark, sauce Boojumoise.

*Entrées.*

Momerath de lait.  
Tweedledum aux Tum-tumatoes

*Roti.*

Aloyau de Jabberwock.  
Selle de Gryphon.

*Volaille.*

Bandersnatch, sauce évitée.  
Jubjub sauté.  
Salade: Feuilles de Tumtum tulgeuses.

*Entremets.*

Crème au Jour Frabjoise.  
Omelette Whiffée.  
Glace à la Duchesse.

*Savory.*

Œufs de Borogove Gimblées.

The following menu is that of a dinner given in Paris by Prince Léon Galitzine, and deserves to be placed on record as an example of a real *diner fin*, elaborate, but not too elaborate, cleverly designed, and thoroughly well executed.



## MENU

Bisque d'écrevisse et Exly frais à la Russe.

Melon glacé. Crevettes de Dieppe.

Hareng frais de Hollande.

Soles à la Maréchale.

Noisettes d'agneau avec crème d'Argenteuil.

Foie gras à la Rossini.

Quenelles d'esturgeon à la Joinville.

Sorbets au Porto blanc.

Granite grande fine Champagne.

Canetons de Rouen flanqués d'ortolans en  
brochettes.

Chaudfroid de Paons en Bellevue.

Flageolets nouveaux au beurre.

Pois à la Française.

Ecrevisses de la Meuse au vin de Saumur.

Bombe Galitzine.

Poires Cressanes.

Dessert.

This is really a rather noble dinner. Observe the dignity of the sturgeon and the peacock. There is very good precedent for the serving of the *hors d'œuvre* after the soup. It is done at many of the best French tables.

There are two or three interesting points



about the following Savoy Hotel menu which are worth consideration.

## MENU DU DINER

Hors d'Œuvres.

Melon Cantaloup Rafrâichi.

Poule-au-Pot Henri IV.

Crème Santé.

Truite d'Ecosse à la Nantua.

Filets de sole en Goujon.

Cailles en Terrines aux petits pois.

Selle de Pré-Salé à la Favorite.

Haricots verts au Beurre.

Mousse de Volaille en Bellevue.

Caneton de Rouen à la Rouennaise.

Salade Victoria. Aubergines Parisiennes.

Bombe Pralinée. Pêches Cardinal.

Canapés Pompadour.

The *poule-au-pot Henri IV* recalls, of course, one of the most charming kings in history, who wished that every one of his subjects might have a fowl in his pot every Sunday all the year round. The fillets of sole *en goujon* are a clever variation of the same thing *en blanchailles* to which one is somewhat accustomed. They are rather larger, but equally crisp and succulent. The *cailles en terrines* are very seasonable,



and contrast remarkably well with the following saddle of mutton.

There has been much discussion lately in France as to the healthiness or otherwise of the hitherto justly esteemed and much-eaten *Canard à la Rouennaise*. Certain it is that some little while ago a few people became very ill after eating it; but, on the other hand, the preparation of the bird is so simple that there hardly seems room for anything deleterious.

Anyhow, the matter has been set at rest once and for all by the appointment under the auspices of *La Société Scientifique d'Hygiène Alimentaire et de l'Alimentation Rationnelle de l'Homme* (heavens, what a name!) of a committee which thoroughly tested and examined the question of the delinquent duck. This committee consisted of M. A. Dastre, *membre de l'Institut*; M. Lapique, *maître de Conférences à la Sorbonne*, M. S. de Raczkowski, *chémiste principal au Laboratoire Municipal*, and M. E. Kohn-Abrest, *du Laboratoire de Toxicologie*. These eminent authorities were well able to give a definite and reassuring reply.



Those who are interested in the duck question may remember a delightful little sketch by the brilliant Alfred Capus, entitled "Emile," in which a *Canard à la Rouennaise* and a solemn *maître d'hôtel* played prominent parts.

The following menu of a ball supper which was served quite recently at a London dance is all that a self-respecting ball supper need be. It seems to me to be excellently designed and thought out, for it provides for all tastes and palates, and appeals to the débutante as well as the sapient middle-aged supper eater.

#### MENU DU SOUPER

Consommé de Volaille.

Suprême Truite Alexandra.

Médallions de Homard Moscovite.

Côtelettes d'Agneau Princesse.

Chaudfroid de Mauviettes Carême.

Aspic de Foie Gras Lucullus.

Cailles à la Jeannette.

Galantine Volaille Périgourdine.

Bœuf Braisé à la Moderne.

Poularde du Mans à l'Andalouse.

Jambon d'York.

Langue à l'Ecarlate.



Salade Impériale.

Gelée Orientale. Charlotte Souveraine.

Crème Victoria.

Macédoine de Fruits aux Liqueurs.

Gâteau Fédora. Pâtisserie Parisienne.

Glaces Bouquetières. Friandises.

Dessert.

We all know, in a vague sort of way, that the best, in fact the only real *pâté de foie gras* comes from Strasburg. This succulent if somewhat dyspeptic dish claimed as inventor for a long time a certain Mathieu, chef in the Prince Bishop of Strasburg's household (Cardinal Rohan). But this is an error. The real originator was one Close, chef to the Maréchal Saxe, who came to Strasburg in the train of his famous master and took up his permanent abode there, marrying Mathieu's widow. It was he and none other who started the goose-liver tureen business in a small shop in the Meisengasse, where, according to comparatively recent reports, it is still carried on. His imitators, of course, are numberless, and some of them very good.

This menu from the Carlton Hotel prac-



tically explains itself. If it err at all, which is doubtful, it is on the right side, namely, that of lightness and digestibility :—

Royal Natives, Caviar, *Blinis*.

*Stchi* Germiny. .

Mousseline de Merlans aux Ecrevisses.

Cailles au Nid. .

Selle de Chevreuil à l'Allemande.

Haricots Verts.

Volaille Truffée. .

Salade.

Asperges Vertes Sauce Hollandaise.

Biscuit Glacé aux Perles des Alpes.

Dessert.

The *Blinis* served with the Caviar is annexed from the Russian cuisine, and is a kind of light sponge or yeast mixture, technically known as a “savarin” without sugar, baked in small pans, and sent to table hot with a sauce of sour cream. *Stchi*, or *Tschi*, is also Russian. It is primarily an army soup, or broth, made of beef, slightly thickened with a brown *roux* and flavoured with sour cream. It is usually served with small, fried *choux* paste-balls.

It is not usual to write the menu of a banquet in the language of ancient Rome,



but it appears the practice survives in Bavaria. Witness the following in "Latin de Cuisine":—

Epulum  
paratum die Consecrationis  
A.R.D. Baronis de Ow  
Episcopi auxil. Ratisbunnensis in aula  
Episcopali.  
Sorbitio cum globulis jecoralibus et lucanicis,  
Jes ex linguis bovinis factum cum panificio.  
Caro bovina cum brassica capitata.  
Assum vitulinum cum lactuca.  
Coffea.  
Potabimus cerevisiam ex hordeo bavarico coctam  
in officina cerevisiae Episcopali.  
Sit saluti!

This formidable-looking legend, on being translated, reads:—

Banquet prepared on the day of the consecration of the Right Reverend Baron von Ow, Suffragan Bishop of Regensburg in the episcopal palace.

Soup with liver and sausage.

Ox-tongue broth with bread.

Beef and cabbage.

Roast veal and lettuce.

Coffee.

We shall drink Bavarian barley beer  
brewed in the episcopal brewery.

May it do us good!



It is not on record, I think, who the original inventor of picnics was ; nor does it much matter. There may be mention of them in Shakespeare, and certainly Nebuchadnezzar would seem to be one of the earliest picnickers in history ; but whosoever may first have suggested the unpacking of a heterogeneous collection of cold cates on a greensward, under a summer sun, must have had a good digestion, a pair of knees that bent both ways, and (it is to be hoped) a positive passion for washing up.

Anyhow, it behoves me to make one or two diffident suggestions as to how the usual monotony of the convivial basket may be varied. Take the conventional pigeon pie, for instance—a truly good thing in its way, but capable of improvement. Angel Pie, according to Mr. Gubbins, is an agreeable change, and his recipe in “Cakes and Ale” may very well be followed. Eliza Acton’s pigeon pie is very good too ; and it is quite worth the trouble to note the directions carefully.

But picnics need not be all pigeon pie.



Let me recommend a toothsome *Chaufroia de Foie-gras en caisses*, which is just round or oval-shaped slices of *foie gras* masked with white or fawn *chaufroid* sauce, set in *soufflé* cases, and decorated with slices of truffle. After the First, a *Ballotine de Perdreau Souvaroff* is a pleasant change. The dainty bird is stuffed with goose-liver farce and truffles, done up like galantine, and braised, pressed, and glazed.

Although personally I am of those who prefer the unadulterated partridge, there are many quite worthy folk who do not, and for such I quote the above. Other suitable picnic dishes, rather out of the usual run, are *Cuisses de Volaille Belle Alliance* (or Waterloo, if you will have it so); *Filets de Bœuf en Chaufroid*; *Pain de Volaille aux Truffes*; and *Ris d'Agneau à l'Amiral*, which is lamb's sweetbread in oval slices, masked with white sauce, decorated with slices of truffles, and dressed on a vegetable aspic border, with salad in the centre.

A new salad always adds lustre to the dullest picnic. Try this: Potatoes, cold, in slices, plentifully besprinkled with peas and



a few broad beans. Or, again, red cabbage with cucumber. In either case the mixture must be carried separately in a bottle, and only poured out at the last moment ; then "fatigue" the salad thoroughly, and see that all the liquid is absorbed from the bottom of the bowl. The following picnic menu is put up by Fortnum and Mason in convenient baskets, and when unpacked may be guaranteed to assuage the cravings of the hungriest.

MENU

Saumon, Salade de Concombres.  
 Homard à la Parisienne.  
 Chaudfroid de Mauviettes à la Chasseur.  
 Poularde à l'Ivoire.  
 Pigeon Pie.  
 Jambon d'York.  
 Pressed Beef. Tongues.  
 Salade Panachée de Haricots Verts et Tomates.  
 Gâteaux Parisiennes.  
 Dessert.  
 Café.  
 Glaces Variées.

In addition to all these nice things, the baskets contain the necessary materials for



tea, such as bread, butter, *petits fours*, cakes, and such-like.

The following menu is one of a dinner at Prince's Restaurant, and calls for no special remark, save perhaps to emphasize the deft juxtaposition of the entrée, roast, and bird, which lead up to one another, so to say, in a subtle succession of delicately contrasted flavours.

#### MENU

Hors d'œuvre à la Parisienne.

Potage Bortsch à la Czarine.

Suprême de Saumon Crème d'anchois.

Aiguillette de Volaille des Bacchantes.

Noisette d'Agneau Edouard VII.

Pommes Nouvelles à la Menthe.

Bécasse rotie à la Broche.

Salad Mimosa.

Salsifis à la Poulette.

Bombe glacée. Diable Rose.

Corbeille de Friandises.

Canapé Princesse.

Dessert.

Café.

One of our French friends who came over here to enjoy *l'entente cordiale*—and British



hospitality—was returning to France with an English acquaintance. On landing at Dieppe, after rather a rough crossing, John Bull asked Jacques Bonhomme, “ Well, did you lunch on board ? ” “ *Non, mon ami,* ” was the reply, “ *tout au contraire !* ”

One may always trust the cuisine at the Savoy. There is a thoroughness of conception about every specially ordered dinner which bespeaks the eye, the hand, the brain of the master. Take the following menu, for example, which, charmingly printed on a graceful little silk Japanese fan, formed an exquisite meal of some originality.

MENU

Melon Cantaloup.	Petite Marmite.
Crème Portugaise.	Truite à la Saatz.
Whitebait Diablé.	
Caille Bridget.	Medaillon de Béhague à l'Estragon.
Petits Pois à la Française.	Pommes Savoyarde.
Soufflé de Jambon à la Hongroise.	Neige au Kirsch.
Caneton au Sang.	
Haricots verts et tomates en salade.	
Fonds d'artichauts à l'Italienne.	
Framboises glacées à la Vanille.	Friandises.
Pailles de Parmesan.	Corbeille de Fruits.



Note the graceful juxtaposition of the Hungarian ham and the Kirsch, followed by duck and French beans. It is touches such as these which in their poetic elegance and subtlety force one to recognize what the high art of cookery really means.

To whom hath it not fallen to take the female faddist in to dinner?—I speak, of course, from the masculine point of view. The plethoric dame, for instance, who says, “Thank you, I only eat toast, and I prefer it *very* crisp”; or the earnest spinster who talks for miles about proteids and other abominable scientific non-gastronomics; or the materfamilias who laments the absence of Bengel from the dinner-party menu? Like the poor, such as these are always with us.

There are fashions in these things, as in everything else. Now and again one comes across a real Fletcherite, who chews his or her food eighty-seven times and allows it to disappear by a slow process of gradual deglutition. Mr. Horace Fletcher himself is, I am given to understand, a man of irreproachable morality, and the possessor, more-



over, of a beautiful *Palazzo* on the Grand Canal at Venice ; but, whether for good or ill, he has introduced a deal of dullness into the modern dinner party. It is obviously impossible to keep up a ready flow of brilliant conversation when every mouthful has to be masticated unto seventy times seven times. Such a salutary procedure puts a damper on prandial discourse, and makes a dinner only one degree less lively than a funeral. It would seem preferable to suffer tortures of indigestion rather than act as a dinner-party wet-blanket.

A former generation suffered from the Andrew Clark regime, and I can even remember a dinner menu divided into halves, one of which was headed "Clarkists," and was confined to the dishes prescribed by that eminent medico, and the other half labelled "Just ordinary folk"—and it was much the better programme of the two. A little later one met the weird folk who produced from hidden recesses mysterious little silver boxes, from which they extracted little white pilules "to be taken between each course"—but I have noticed that these people usually ate



a remarkably hearty dinner, despite, or perhaps because, of these same pilules.

One comes across, too, the Stokerites, with their peculiar antipathies, the "Natural Feeders," the "Little Grangers," and the *maigre tous les jours* sort of folk. As for the vegetarians, there is little to be said for or against them. They are, of course, fully justified in their opinions, but they do give a lot of bother at an ordinary dinner party. I may be unfortunate in my vegetarian friends, but it always appears to me that after a time they seem to assimilate certain characteristics of the food they eat, and eventually become very like their favourite vegetables; so much so that they might almost be accused of cannibalism. Certain it is that I can spot a carrot-eating man by his hair, an onion-lover by his breath, and a Brussels-sprout devotee by his whiskers.

Take it, however, by and large, the food faddist, be it a he or a she, is rarely a pleasant table-companion, and in these times of strenuous dining he, she, or it, is usually a poor conversationalist and a poorer critic; which is a pity.



It is quite a mistake to imagine that a good dinner can afford to despise the adjuncts of a well-decorated table. Nothing could be more fallacious. One's sense of taste should not alone be titillated. One's palate-gusto is distinctly enhanced by something pleasant to look upon, by something artistic to accompany the mere mechanism of mastication, by a general sense of beauty and non-flamboyant restfulness.

We have gone far in this direction during the past two or three decades. There are many happily still surviving among us who remember vividly, and not without a certain amount of awe, the vast erections which appeared on the dinner-tables of our forbears. The silver branch candelabra, the epergnes, the great piles of fruit, the towering "set-pieces," the bushy and umbrageous plants and flowers, the plates of mixed biscuits, and the various impossible dishes of confectionery which nobody was expected to eat.

But all this has disappeared, and one is no longer obliged to talk to one's opposite neighbour through a jungle of horticulture.



Flowers are best shown in low bowls, either china or silver, there are no useless impedimenta, the tiresome trails of smilax have long since been relegated to Peckham dinner-tables, and we have at last arrived at an era of plenty of elbow-room, discreet floral decoration, and a clean sweep of ridiculous encumbrances.

Some hostesses, indeed, cultivate the Japanese grammar of the arrangement of flowers, which gives a particular and especial value to each leaf, branch, and stalk. Others again will have merely half a dozen blooms, all told, on the table, but each bloom perfect of its kind, and displayed to the best advantage. High vases are as obsolete as the dodo, and people are gradually becoming alive to the fact that four or five exquisite roses in a big flat Hawthorn dish are more decorative than all the miserable little white china cupids in Regent Street.

The choice of odours, too, is an important consideration. No hostess with any consideration for the olfactory nerves of her guests would put strongly perfumed flowers on the dinner-table. They would



only destroy the flavour of the cates, and cause annoyance rather than pleasure. Even the lovely syringa, which a good lady once described as "a respectable gardenia," is too strong, and at the most a purely neutral scent is permissible.

In the height of summer I have met a single water-lily floating in a copper dish in the middle of the table; the lily was so perfect in itself that any other decoration would have seemed superfluous and impertinent. The stalks of flowers seen through clear glass are as beautiful as the blooms, and an arrangement of green leaves only, with no flower at all, is, if rightly understood and designed, very difficult to beat.

Only recently, dining in an artist's studio, I was delighted with a few sprays of medlar blossom on the table, and a mass of hydrangea on the sideboard, immediately below a shelf of old pewter. The harmony was wonderfully beautiful. Such touches of taste entirely alter the character of a dinner, and from a mere feeding party it becomes an artistic pleasure. For, after all, the mere act of eating is not in itself beautiful.



Reverting to the food-faddist, there are some who, quite apart from doctors' reasons, have the most peculiar likes and dislikes. Some never touch soup; others positively like boiled veal; and it is on record that Dr. Johnson poured lobster sauce over his plum-pudding. It is not easy to understand this extraordinary combination of the great lexicographer, but the story has good authority.

Some folk, quite worthy folk too, like cold meat and pickles, even when abroad; others make a point of drinking the wine of the country. It is told of the great Duke of Wellington that when journeying through France with Alava, in 1814, on being asked at what time they should start next day, he invariably replied "At daybreak." And to the question what they should have for dinner, he always answered, "Cold meat." "*Je les ai eu en horreur, à la fin,*" Alava declared, "*ces deux mots-là—'daybreak' et 'cold meat.'*"

The menu of a good summer dinner is always interesting. Here is one which should amply satisfy the most fastidious.



It was cooked by one of the best chefs in London, and seems to me to contain some particularly interesting features.

MENU DU DINER

Zakuska.

Potage à la Dauphine.

Purée d'asperges à la St. Georges.

Filets de Sole Bagration.

Saumon froid à la Doria.

Ris de Veau en Caisses à la Périgueux.

Petites Croustades Glacés à la Montglas.

Selle de Mouton froid.

Courges farcies.

Cannetons Sautés. Sauce Bigarade.

Salade de Choux Rouges.

Maïs à l'Américaine.

Macédoine de Fruits.

Bombe de Juillet.

Glace de Crème aux Truffes.

Another hot-weather menu is a comparatively simple luncheon, and is principally remarkable for the fact that it is entirely cold, from the prawns to the coffee. We have all of us, of course, had many cold lunches, racing, motoring, at Henley, or elsewhere, but as a rule these casual meals lack character and homogeneity ; they are



of a "chucked-together" sort of nature, and whilst serving a useful purpose of their own, can hardly be called perfect pictures of their kind. No such objection can, I think, be made to the subjoined.

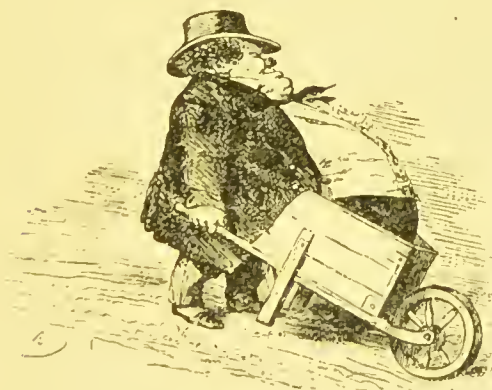
### MENU DU DÉJEUNER

Crevettes Roses.  
 Consommé en Gelée.  
 Salade de Poisson.  
 Truite froide. Sauce Rémoulade.  
 Filet de Bœuf aux Légumes Glacés.  
 Poulet Provençale.  
 Salade Miladi.  
 Pêches Daisy Miller.  
 Coupe Jacques.  
 Café Glacé.

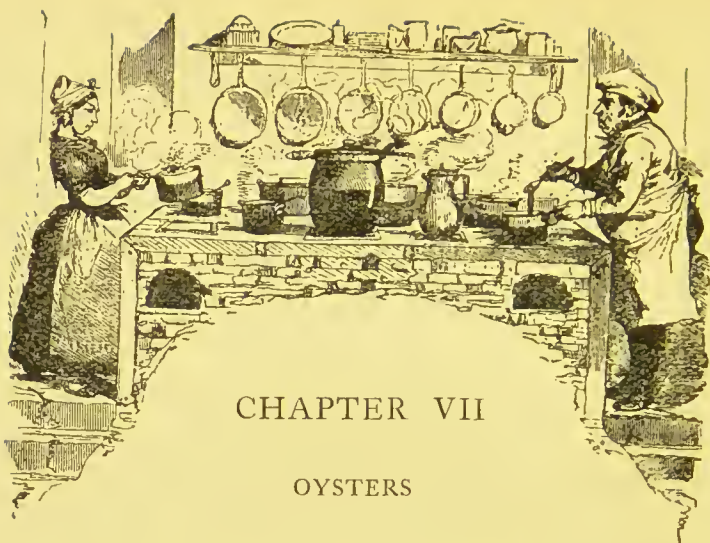
The following little story from Mr. G. W. E. Russell's "Londoner's Logbook" has a delightful gastronomical moral, which might be adopted, with advantage, by many hosts of to-day: "‘Come and dine at eight—pot-luck, you know. Don't dress.’ That hospitable formula recalls a genial knight who dwelt in Berkeley Square, and, applying his whole mind to the subject of dinners, attained to high perfection in the art of giving



them. Two benevolent practices of his invention linger pleasantly in the memory. He caused each course to begin at a different point at the table, so that every guest in turn got the first chance at a dish. He dealt out the asparagus like cards, an equal number of pieces to each guest ; and if on completion of the deal he saw that any one had got smaller pieces than his neighbours, he used the residue to redress the inequality. Surely such are those actions of the just which smell sweet and blossom in the dust."







## CHAPTER VII

### OYSTERS

“Tom, whom to-day no noise stirs,  
Lies buried in these cloisters ;  
If at the last trump  
He does not quickly jump ;  
Only cry ‘Oysters !’ ”

*Epitaph on a Colchester Man's Grave*

If you have eaten an oyster at Colchester or Faversham, in August, fresh from the sea ; or a melting native at Milton, the best oyster in the world, in October ; a Helford native in Cornwall ; Whispered Pandores and Aberdours at Edinburgh, on the “Feast of Shells,” one hundred for a shilling, dripping in Prestonpans sea-water ; Carlingfords and Powldoodies, of Burran, at Dublin ; or even a Jersey oyster at St. Heliers, you know what an oyster should be.

These are the words of wisdom, written



some thirty years ago by Herbert Byng Hall, a gastronomic writer of some eminence, who had made a special study of the Oyster, and wrote thereon learnedly and *con amore*.

Somehow or other there is something persuasively and personally intimate in one's relations with an oyster, or with a couple of dozen oysters, for that matter. One does not feel the same sentimental regard for the pig that provides one with one's morning rasher of bacon that one does for the merest preprandial oyster. And this feeling of friendship, almost intimacy, is always to be found in the writings of those who dilate upon "the breedy creatures," as Christopher North called our illustrious bivalves in the "Noctes Ambrosianæ."

Dr. Kitchiner, for instance, says: "Those who wish to enjoy this delicious restorative in its utmost perfection must eat it at the moment it is opened, with its own gravy in the undershell; if not eaten absolutely alive, its flavour and spirit are lost. The true lover of an oyster will have some regard for the feelings of his little favourite, and contrive to detach the fish from the shell so



dexterously that the oyster is hardly conscious he has been ejected from his lodging till he feels the teeth of the piscivorous gourmet tickling him to death."

There are other instances innumerable of a certain dainty touch in dealing with oysters. Contact with them seems to engender humour, good nature, and a tricksey spirit. Huxley called oysters "a delicious flash of gustatory lightning"; and there is a story told of the great master, G. F. Watts, who was challenged by Millais and Leighton to produce a humorous picture, whereupon he painted a primitive man and woman on the seashore. The woman is looking with awestruck admiration at the man who has just swallowed an oyster. The man himself appears very doubtful as to the result. The picture was called "B.C. The First Oyster."

It was originally said in a very old number of the "North British Review," that "he must have been a very bold man who first swallowed an oyster." An old legend assigns the first act of oyster-eating to a very natural cause. It is related that a man walking by the sea one day picked up an



oyster, just as it was in the act of gaping. Observing the extreme smoothness of the interior of the shell, he insinuated his finger between them that he might feel their shining surface, when suddenly they closed upon the exploring digit, with a sensation less pleasurable than he anticipated. The prompt withdrawal of his finger was scarcely a more natural movement than its transfer to his mouth. It is not very clear why people (including babies) when they hurt their fingers put them into their mouths ; but it is very certain that they do, and in this case the result was most fortunate. The owner of the finger tasted oyster juice for the first time, as Elia's Chinaman, having burned his finger, first tasted crackling. The savour was delicious ; he had made a great discovery ; so he picked up the oysters, forced open the shells, banqueted upon the contents, and soon brought oyster-eating into fashion.

That tender personal regard for the innocent oyster, which I have just referred to, is very manifest in one of the most widely known poems in the English language. I



mean Lewis Carroll's "Walrus and the Carpenter."

"O Oysters, come and walk with us!"

The Walrus did beseech.

"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,

Along the briny beach;

We cannot do with more than four,

To give a hand to each."

. . . . .

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,

"You've had a pleasant run!

Shall we be trotting home again?"

But answer came there none.

And this was scarcely odd, because

They'd eaten every one.

The kindly regard for the susceptibilities of the oysters is kept up even until the dire *dénoûment* of the drama. Again we are touched by a fragment by the same author, of which, alas, we shall never know the full purport. It runs thus:—

I passed by his garden and marked, with one eye,  
How the owl and the oyster were sharing a pie.

(*Cætera desunt.*)

Mr. Thomas Hardy did not, I am sure, in the title of his novel, "The Return of



the Native," intend to celebrate the coming of oysters into the dinner menu, but it seems to sum up in a brief and pithy phrase one of the great events of the autumn. The old convention that oysters are only eatable in those months which are spelled with an "r" has, of course, much to be said for it ; at any rate, so far as British oysters are concerned.

Abroad it is different, and the *parcs aux huîtres* at French watering-places give quite excellent oysters in August, and even in July. The *huîtres de Marennes*, *huîtres d'Ostende*, and the tiny little green ones are by no means to be despised, although they do not, perhaps, quite come up in lusciousness of flavour to the real Whitstable native.

We are somewhat oyster-spoiled in this country, and particularly in London. We go to Scott's, Sweeting's, Driver's, Hampton's, Rule's, or any first-class oyster shops, and we get, as we know we shall get, the very best brand of the very best oyster in the world ; fresh, clean, untainted, and uncontaminated, which, after all is said and



done, cannot be vouched for in the case of second-rate hotels and caterers.

Whether to drink champagne, Chablis, stout, or nothing with oysters is a nice point which has not as yet been authoritatively decided. Of course, champagne and Chablis go far to assimilate the oyster, but at the same time there are those (and—dare I confess it?—I am amongst the number) who are venturesome enough to assert that the oyster, pure and simple, requires no alcoholic addition. Drink Chablis, or a light hock, *after* the oyster feast, by all means; but when eating your two or three dozen on the deep shell (always order them on the deep shell) imbibe their own liquor only, and be thankful.

“Un voyageur anglais, transi de froid, arrive dans une hôtellerie de village où il n’y avait d’autre feu que celui de la cuisine, dont la cheminée était gardée par un grand nombre de voyageurs arrivées avant lui. Pour se faire faire place, il usa d’un stratagème assez original. Il avait aperçu en entrant quelques cloyères d’huîtres. Il dit au maître de la maison, ‘Monsieur, avez-



vous des huîtres ?’ ‘Oui, Monsieur, et de très-fraîches.’ ‘Faites-en porter une cloyère à mon cheval.’ ‘Comment, Monsieur, est-ce que votre cheval mange des huîtres?’ ‘Oui, Monsieur ; au surplus, faites ce que je dis ; s’il ne les mange pas, d’autres les mangeront.’

“Le maître obéit, et les voyageurs allaient voir un cheval manger des huîtres—qu’il ne mangea pas. Pendant ce temps, le nouvel arrivé prend place au feu. Le maître de retour lui dit, ‘Monsieur, je savais bien que votre cheval ne mangeait pas d’huîtres.’ ‘Eh bien, non,’ dit l’Anglais, ‘je les mangerai ; ces messieurs ont quitté leur place, je la garderai ; ainsi à tout cela, il n’y aura rien de perdu.’ Et, en effet, il vida la cloyère sans quitter le coin du feu.”

This is a quotation, apt enough, I think, from “*La Gastronomie pour Rire, ou Anecdotes, Réflexions, Maximes, et Folies Gourmandes,*” par César Gardeton, auteur du “*Directeur des Estomacs,*” Paris, 1827.

As a useful recipe for oysters, I should like to refer to an extract from a letter from Swift to Stella ; it runs thuswise :—



Lord Masham made me go home with him to eat boiled oysters. Take oysters, wash them clean; that is, wash their shells clean; then put your oysters in an earthen pot, with their hollow side down; then put this pot, covered, into a great kettle with water, and so let them boil. Your oysters are boiled in their own liquor, and do not mix water.

If oysters have to be cooked at all, which is a doctrine I do not support, then the above seems as good a way as any other. Really good oysters are, anyhow, too precious to be cooked, but should be degustated *in puris naturalibus*.

A story which I venture to think apocryphal is quoted by W. R. Hare in a curious little book, "On the Search for a Dinner," published in London in 1857. Speaking of dining in Paris, he refers to the celebrated restaurant the *Rocher du Cancale*, and relates how an English "Milord" drove up to the establishment and ordered (and ate) a hearty meal of twenty-nine dozen oysters; after which Milord died suddenly—and no wonder! They carried him down with great difficulty to the carriage. The groom,



on seeing his master's body arrive, exclaimed, with great coolness, "It is the third time that Milord gives himself the pleasure of dying of indigestion." "He will not die a fourth time," answered the *patron*, with sorrow. Milord was buried at Père-la-Chaise. His facetious friends deposit every year by the remains of the defunct an enormous quantity of oyster-shells. The tomb is about five-and-twenty yards from that of Héloïse and Abélard. On a slab of black marble the following epitaph is inscribed: "Here lies —, dead for the third time in a duel with the oysters of the Rocher du Cancale."

I confess that I have not had the curiosity to verify the tombstone.

Brillat-Savarin has an oyster anecdote to the effect that he was at Versailles in the year 1798 as Commissary of the Directory, and had frequently to meet the Registrar of the Tribunal, M. Laperte. The latter was so fond of oysters that he used to grumble about never having had enough to satisfy him. Being determined to procure him that satisfaction, Brillat-Savarin asked



Laperte to dinner, and the latter accepted. "I kept up with him," says the host, "to the third dozen, letting him then go on by himself. He went on steadily to the thirty-second dozen—that is to say, for more than an hour, as they were opened but slowly—and as in the meantime I had nothing else to do—a state quite unbearable at table—I stopped him just as he was beginning to show more appetite than ever. "My dear friend," I said, "it must be some other day that you have enough to satisfy you; let us now have some dinner." We took dinner, and he showed all the vigour and hunger of a man who had been fasting.

These oyster-gorges are, however, mere epitomes of vulgar gluttony. There is no more gastronomic satisfaction to be got out of thirty-three dozen than out of the conventional two dozen. In fact, doctors rarely prescribe more than one dozen at a time.

Horace, Martial, and Juvenal, Cicero and Seneca, Pliny, Ætius, and the old Greek doctor Oribasius, whom Julian the Apostate delighted to honour, have all enlarged upon the virtues of the oyster. It would be easy



to add to the list and to quote corroborative passages, but the thing has been done so often and so copiously, that it would certainly be supererogatory and tedious. The *Tabella Cibaria* has been referred to by every culinary scribe, and we really know more about the oyster habits of the Romans than we do about those of the inhabitants of the Hebrides; which is absurd.

G. A. Sala says that the Pontiffs of Pagan Rome caused oysters to be served at every repast; but the delicacy must have been very expensive, since a basket of oysters cost the equivalent of nine pounds sterling. They were served raw and were dexterously opened by a slave at a side-table at the beginning of the dinner.

There is a story told of an astute Roman epicure named Fulvius Hirpinus who constructed on his estate, close to the seashore, a fish-pond where he stored or "parked" oysters, which he fattened with paste and cooked wine, worked to the consistency of honey. He was certainly astute because besides regaling himself and his friends on these artificially fattened oysters, he



drove a roaring trade in selling them wholesale and retail to the nobility and gentry of Rome.

The same authority goes on to say that, oddly enough, in a comparatively modern cookery book, that of Will Rabisha, there is a direction, a rather ferocious one, that while oysters are undergoing the process of broiling they should be fed with white wine and grated bread. Of course many ways were adopted in those days for the feeding of oysters ; but a paste of oatmeal and water seems to have been the staple of the sustenance given to the creatures before they were considered to be fit for the table.

The Greeks, according to Athenæus, boiled and fried their oysters, finding them, however, best of all when roasted in the coals till the shells opened.

As early as the seventeenth century the French prepared them *en etuvée* and *en fricasée*. Both recipes appear in the "Délices de la Campagne" (1654), a book of extreme interest and full of quaint information ; but not, it would seem, strictly reliable as a record of the cookery of the time.





Frontispiece to "Des Magens Vertheidigung der edlen Austern"  
Prague, 1731

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We are so accustomed nowadays to pay half a crown, three and sixpence, and even more for our dozen oysters, that it seems almost incredible that our fathers regaled themselves thereon at the common or general price of sixpence a dozen. An old poem on the subject says :—

Happy the man, who, void of care and strife,  
In silken or in leathern purse retains  
A splendid shilling : he nor hears with pain  
New oysters cried, nor sighs for cheerful ale.

This is from "The Splendid Shilling," by John Philip, which, according to Steele in the "Tatler," was "the finest burlesque poem in the English language."

Just exactly why the price of oysters should have increased so enormously in recent years has never been satisfactorily explained. Many ridiculous reasons have been given, but they seem either impertinent, or inadequate, or both. We need only refer to the pages of the "Pickwick Papers" for confirmation.

"Before proceeding to the Legacy Duty Office about proving the will of his late wife,



Mr. Weller, senior, and his fellow-coachmen, as witnesses, bethought themselves of having a drop of beer, and a little cold beef, or an oyster. These viands were promptly produced, and the luncheon was done ample justice to. If one individual evinced greater powers than another it was the coachman with the hoarse voice, who took an imperial pint of vinegar with his oysters, and did not betray the least emotion."

Another and more striking illustration.

"It's a very remarkable circumstance, sir," said Sam Weller, "that poverty and oysters always seem to go together; the poorer a place is the greater call there seems to be for oysters. Look here, sir! blest if I don't think that ven a man's wery poor he rushes out of his lodgings, and eats oysters for regular desperation."

The Colchester Oyster Feast is an annual function which is usually graced by the presence and assistance of political and other notabilities. The Mayor and Corporation open the proceedings by "sizing" the oysters, eating a large number at luncheon, and following the luncheon with prescribed



draughts of gin and slices of gingerbread. This historic repast seems, on the face of it, to be of a somewhat incongruous nature ; but it is said by those who have survived it, and their number is very large, that the cates and beverage go well together, and never quarrel among themselves.

Until comparatively recent times, another annual Oyster Feast took place at Edinburgh, with a kind of civic ceremonial, known as the Feast of Shells. A voyage was made by Provosts and Bailiffs to the oyster beds in the Firth of Forth, and "though the solemnity of wedding the Frith formed no part of the Chief Magistrate's office, as wedding the Adriatic with a gold ring did that of the Doge of Venice," three cheers were given by all present as the first "dredge" was hoisted on to the deck of the civic barge.

There is an old fisherman's song, now almost forgotten, one verse of which runs :—

The Herring loves the merry moonlight,  
The Mackerel loves the wind,  
But the Oyster loves the dredger's song,  
For he comes of a gentle kind.



Many years ago a sort of popular belief was current to the absurd effect that Oysters could be trained to sing. It is impossible to say whence the superstition arose, but it was helped by a noted exhibition, in London, of a "Whistling Oyster" which was supposed to emit certain sibilant sounds. Thousands flocked to hear it, but it was more or less conclusively proved, however, that it was a trick of ventriloquism on the part of the showman.

In Tom Hood's "Miss Kilmansegg and her Golden Leg," there is an apt reference to a Colchester Oyster, when they were very much cheaper than they are to-day, and, as before mentioned, were practically poor men's food.

What different fates our stars accord !  
One babe is welcomed, and wooed as a lord,  
Another is shunned like a leper ;  
One to the world's wine, and honey, and corn,  
Another, like Colchester native, is born  
To its vinegar only, and pepper.

The Americans always seem to do things on a larger scale than we, in our effete little island, are able to do. They excel even in



the fecundity of their oysters. The British mollusc *Ostrea edulis* produces about a million young in a season. One of the American variety, *Ostrea Virginiana*, about ten times as many.

There is a great Oyster cult in the United States, and the different manners of cooking, preparing, and serving the oyster are manifold. A book might be written on the pros and cons of cooking an oyster at all, and opinions as to its legitimacy differ, even among the erudite on the subject. Be that as it may, the Americans certainly owe much of their nerve-strength, hustlesomeness, and vigour to their enormous oyster consumption. It is the ideal food to replace and restore nerve power. It is hardly too much to say that the oyster is the foundation of America's commercial success.

Oliver Wendell Holmes says somewhere that two immense oysters should be carved in marble and placed on top of the Washington monument in Baltimore, instead of the statue of the immortal George. "I am not in favour of removing the Father of his Country from off his imposing pedestal, but



should like to compromise matters by making him sit on a pile of oyster-shells in lieu of a curule chair."

When Thackeray went to Boston in 1852 he had some trouble with the very large American oyster. "He first selected the smallest one of the half-dozen (rejecting a larger one because, as he said, it resembled the High Priest's servant's ear that Peter cut off), and then bowed his head as though he were saying Grace. Opening his mouth very wide, he struggled for a moment, after which all was over. I shall never forget the comic look of despair he cast upon the other five over-occupied shells. I asked him how he felt. 'Profoundly grateful,' he said, 'as if I had swallowed a small baby.'"

But Thackeray was not an authority, for he ranked "the dear little juicy green oysters of France" above the "great white flaccid natives in England that look as if they had been fed on pork." This is ungenerous.

The poet Gay wrote in praise of Oysters when Fleet Ditch, now turned into the Farringdon Street sewer, was still a London



eyesore. It appears to have been a centre of London Oyster hucksters.

If where Fleet Ditch with muddy current flows  
You chance to roam, where oyster tubs in rows  
Are ranged beside the posts, there stay thy haste,  
And with the savoury fish indulge thy taste.

Oysters are not unconnected with Pearls, although a real Oyster-lover must necessarily regret that a large number of his darling food is sacrificed for the trivial purpose of feminine adornment. It seems such waste! It were well to cast pearls before swine, if the molluscs were reserved for the pig-keepers. The pearls, by the by, which are used in heraldry to denote the gradations of rank in the coronets of peers, are the produce of the *Pinna marina*, the large pearl-oyster of the East Indies.

A curious pearl case came before the law courts in Hamburg recently. A merchant and his wife, dining at a local restaurant, began their dinner, as right-minded folk always should, with oysters. In one of the shells they found quite a considerable-sized and admirably formed pearl. They were



about to carry it off in triumph, when the restaurant-keeper interfered and claimed it as his property. This was disputed, and the matter taken to law, the pearl in question being valued by experts at one hundred and fifty pounds. Eventually the decision was given against the restaurant proprietor, the judge holding that by purchasing the oysters the guest was entitled to anything found in them. A just and upright judge !

Between 1775 and 1818 there lived and flourished (more or less) in Malta, Naples, Paris, and elsewhere, a notable composer, Nicolo Isouard, more generally known as Nicolo. He wrote many operas, all of which are now forgotten. Having lived in Naples he was a great macaroni eater, and prepared the dish himself in a somewhat original manner. He stuffed each tube of macaroni with a mixture of marrow, *pâté de foie gras*, chopped truffles, and cut-up oysters. He then heated up the preparation, and ate it with his left hand covering up his eyes, for he asserted that he could not afford to allow the beautiful thoughts engendered by such exquisite food to be disturbed by any ex-



traneous mundane sights. No wonder he died young.

There is a Russian story, averagely true I opine, of the emancipation of a serf through the agency of oysters. One of the ancestors of the banking firm of Sjalouschine was originally a serf of Prince Cheremeteff. The serf, by dealing in corn and cattle, had become very well-to-do, and he asked the Prince again and again to set him free, even offering him large sums of money as the price of his emancipation. But the Prince always refused, as he was rather tickled by the idea of owning a serf who was comparatively a rich man.

In the beginning of one September the serf went to St. Petersburg on business, and brought back with him a barrel of oysters, the first of the season. When he returned he asked to see the Prince, but was told that His Highness was in a terribly bad temper because his chef had forgotten to order any oysters. Whereupon the serf went straight to the Prince and offered him his barrel of oysters in exchange for his freedom. The Prince being, as aforesaid, of a humorous

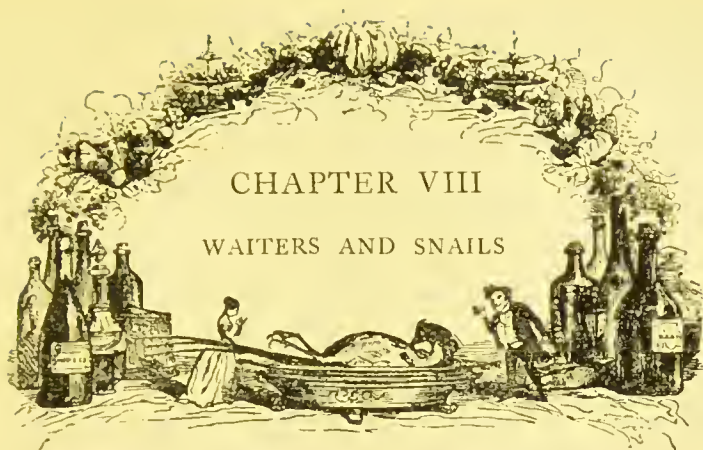


disposition, and besides, wanting the oysters badly, was taken by the notion. He agreed to the bargain, and clenched it by saying, "We will now lunch together on the oysters."

The family of Sjalouschine is said to bear oysters on their coat-of-arms in memory of the emancipation.

At a dinner-party where there were twelve covers, one of the courses consisted of scalloped oysters in silver shells. The set of shells was broken—there were only eleven. The mistress, therefore, told the butler that she would not eat any oysters. When the oyster course came, he placed before his mistress one of the shells. To his horror she did not decline it. She took up her fork and was about to plunge into it, when the man flew to her side. "Pardon me, madam," he murmured, "but you said I was to remind you that the doctor forbade your eating oysters on any account."





“Will you walk a little faster?” said the Whiting  
to the Snail ;

“There’s a lobster close behind me and he’s  
treading on my tail.”

LEWIS CARROLL

THE collocation of Waiters and Snails under one chapter-heading is not entirely fortuitous. The remote connexion which may fairly be said to exist between the two is not perhaps as marked to-day as it was some time ago, for waiters are improving rapidly, and snails—well, snails are remaining very much where they used to be. The advent of the well-trained foreign waiter has done much to improve our restaurant dinner-table, and, incidentally, the temper of the average diner. Of the expert, deft, and *sobber* British waiter there is also nothing but good to be said.



The snail has no family relationship with either of these classes.

Unfortunately, however, there are others, many others, who are slow, dirty, ignorant, and only occasionally sober. It is such as these who degrade waitersdom, and to whom the snail is a fit comparison—save that the waiter is not edible. Nothing could be smarter than a good English waiter with a knowledge of foreign dishes, or a good foreign waiter with a knowledge of English ; and thanks to the interest now taken in everything appertaining to dining in public places, neither is now as uncommon as he used to be.

One P. Z. Didsbury, an American deipnosophist, once said in his wisdom : “ In a restaurant when a waiter offers you turbot, ask for salmon, and when he offers you a sole, order a mackerel ; as language to men, so fish has been given to the waiter to disguise his thoughts.”

This maligns the individual waiter, of course ; the man who is used to attending on you, who knows your likes and dislikes, and takes a personal interest in your con-



tentment, but it is fairly typical of the average restaurant waiter who sees you for the first time and thinks you just one of the ordinary mob. For the casual customer is the facile dupe of the waiter. He comes, he orders his dinner, or preferably, permits it to be ordered for him, pays his bill, and goes away. Eating with him partakes of the stoking process, and he reckons little of the particular *à la* offered to him, if it be toothsome, and saucily disguised.

In the best restaurants, as well in England as on the Continent, deception, fraud, and trickery are comparatively rare. They would not pay. But in nearly every restaurant below the class of the best some one or other or all of the traditional time-honoured wiles of the waiter are practised on the more or less unsuspecting customer.

There is, for instance, the well-known trick of "Putting the change to bed." It is preferably employed when a man is dining with a lady who, to the cynical and experienced eye of the waiter, is obviously not his wife. This is the very simple *modus operandi*. Your bill, we will say, as presented



to you, discreetly folded in half on a plate, comes to one pound fifteen shillings. You place a couple of sovereigns under the upper fold of the bill. The waiter returns with the change. If you are careless you do not count it. You see half a crown on the bill, and say nonchalantly "All right." Whereupon the waiter is exceeding glad, for you have given him five shillings. If, on the other hand, you are observant, accurate, and careful, you will say, "The change is not right." The waiter, who has carefully concealed the second half-crown between the bill and the plate, will semi-indignantly say, "I beg your pardon, sir!" and drawing away the bill, the two half-crowns will be exposed to view. After having doubted his word, you cannot do less than give the poor man the two coins. So the waiter scores either way. "Putting the change to bed" rarely fails.

Mr. Pinero illustrated this trick very neatly in his delightful farce, "The Magistrate," some years ago at the Old Court Theatre.

It is said that some of the most famous



conjurers of to-day began life as restaurant waiters, and certainly the knack of palming the cork of the wine you ordered, and serving you with an inferior quality thereof, meanwhile gravely depositing the palmed cork next to the bottle, in its cradle, is a very old and usually successful trick. It is as well, too, to see that the label on the wine bottle is dry and stuck fast, because, unless you have ordered the man "just to take the chill off," he may have helped himself from the common stock of red or white wine, and affixed the label of your particular vintage as he came upstairs.

It is quite extraordinary how many men who pride themselves on knowing a good bottle of wine are deceived in this way. There is an old story of three men dining together at a cheap restaurant. One ordered a pint of Pontet Canet, another a pint of Medoc, and the third a pint of Beaune. The waiter went to a speaking-tube, and shouted down it, "Three small reds!"

The question of the substitution of corks has many and quaint developments. An enormous trade is done at third- and fourth-



rate restaurants with "faked" champagne, which it were mere flattery to call even "sparkling petrol." The *restaurateurs*, foreigners it is to be hoped to a man, import a thoroughly innocuous thin white wine, and then bottle and aerate it, just as they would soda-water. The corks are replaced (after being drawn) by genuine corks of well-known brands, and there is a large market for good, sound, used champagne corks. This market is supplied by the waiters at good-class restaurants, where wines correct to designation are served. If the diner does not happen to collect champagne corks (and few of us have this weakness), the waiter carefully gathers them when clearing the table for dessert.

This is a genuine letter addressed by such a waiter to a reputable firm of champagne importers: "I beg to send you a hundred corks of the well-known brands of —— and ——. They may be useful to you. I am waiter at ——, and am often asked by customers to recommend a wine. Awaiting your favourable reply, I am, etc."

Another kind of waiter, neither as sharp





LES BOISSONS : PAR BERTALL

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nor as business-like as the foregoing, on being asked what liqueur brandies they had, replied, "Two, sir ; one's 1854 and the other's a shilling." That kind of waiter, however, is more fool than thief.

A very pretty dodge, and one, moreover, which the continental waiter finds very remunerative, is to add the date of the month to the amount of the bill. If you are dining on 24 June, and the addition comes to thirty-five francs, it is very easy to combine the two sums, particularly if the date be somewhat carelessly inscribed at the head of the account. The foreign waiter is a rare judge of character, and can usually (though not always) tell beforehand whether or no it be safe to try any of his little games.

A favourite *truc* in foreign cafés, and one for which one should always be on the look out, is the giving of bad silver in the way of change, as many foreign coinages are now obsolete, and one cannot be too careful in this respect. It is usually a matter of date. The coin is not a bad coin, but simply not current. The Swiss two-franc piece, for



instance, is all right if Madame Helvetia is depicted sitting down, but all wrong if she be standing up. Then the Greek, Roumanian, and Turkish coins are non-admissible, and certain Italian cart-wheels or five-lire pieces no longer acceptable. It requires some experience to recognize at a glance in a handful of silver how many coins are right and how many wrong.

A fraud of this kind was defeated, and met with its own just reward, only last summer at a French casino, a notorious haunt of the "slim" waiter. An Englishman having had *consommations* to the amount of two francs, paid with a louis, and received eighteen francs change. Of this change he subsequently found that seven francs, a five-franc and a two-franc piece, were useless. He returned the next night with some friends, found out the same waiter, ordered sundry refreshment, and when paying-time came, settled the bill with the useless coins he had received the night before. The waiter refused to accept them, the guest refused on his part to pay in any other coin. The matter was referred to an official of the



casino, the matter explained, and the English guest was supported. For once, therefore, the waiter was hoist with his own petard.

It is common knowledge that the waiters among themselves have a regular trade in these coins ; they change hands at about one-third of their face value, and the dupe is, nine times out of ten, the British tourist.

It would be unfair to suggest that all waiters are guilty of these or similar wiles. There are hundreds of good, trustworthy waiters who would disdain them, and who know by experience, precept, or intuition that honesty is the best policy in the dining as in other worlds.

At a first-class waiters' training school or college, such as the well-known Radunski's, at Frankfort-on-the-Main, or one or other of the Swiss establishments, all such tricks are sternly discouraged, and the budding *maitre d'hôtel* is strongly impressed with the golden rule that it does not pay, in the long run, to cheat clients in any shape or form.

This is especially true of the highest class of restaurant, for waiters travel about



Europe a great deal, and the man who waits on you at the Carlton to-night may turn up at the Ritz in Paris next week, at Monte Carlo next month, and at Homburg next year. If he has cheated you badly, you will remember him (though not in the time-honoured waiter's sense), and his good name will be gone once and for all.

I referred just now to the foreign schools for waiters where they are systematically, and one might almost say scientifically, trained for their profession, which is neither an easy nor, in the end, an unremunerative one. Many sons of well-to-do German, Swiss, and Italian hotel and restaurant proprietors, lads who have been to good schools and received a first-class education, are content to begin at the very bottom of the ladder, even as *piccolo* or boy attendant, and gradually to work their way through all the ranks even to that of *maître d'hôtel*.

A German lad who wishes to become a waiter goes, first to Radunski, at Frankfort, or to some other regular training school for waiters. At the end of two years' hard work, if he has gained his certificate, he



goes to an hotel or restaurant as an improver, without salary, for two years or more.

Then he comes to London, and, for the sake of learning English, enters an English family at a very small wage. Having mastered English, he is off to France to learn French on similar terms.

Finally, he returns to London as an "aid" waiter, and by attending to business he can rise to be a superintendent or a manager.

But the Englishman wants to undertake skilled labour and earn full money without a proper training. Look, on the other hand, at the case of the English butler. He is renowned throughout the world, but then he was content to begin as a page and pass through the second stage of footman.

A well-known restaurant manager once said to me: "Though we are patriotic, we cannot allow patriotism to stand in the way of efficiency. We must, for our customers' sakes, employ the best men we can get, irrespective of nationality, although we should prefer Englishmen, of course."

Some attempt has been made, is being made in fact, to establish a training school



for British waiters, but its success is, I fear, problematical. And this for various reasons. Few, if any, professional men would dream of their boys being trained to be waiters; it would be beneath their shoddy suburban dignity. Also, the class from which the average British waiter is drawn seems to be constitutionally incapable of acquiring even the merest smattering of a foreign language. He despises any tongue but his own.

The British Waiters' Association has done excellent work on the right lines, but very much remains still to be accomplished.

The average British waiter at the ordinary railway refreshment-room is usually a terribly slow and untidy individual. True, one has learned not to expect too much at a railway station. *A la gare, comme à la gare!*

Mr. Jerome K. Jerome has an amusing tirade on the subject. He says: "The slowest waiter I know is the British railway refreshment-room waiter. His very breathing, regular, harmonious, penetrating, instinct as it is with all the better attributes of a well-preserved grandfather's clock, conveys suggestion of dignity and peace. He is a huge,



impressive person. There emanates from him an atmosphere of Lotusland. The otherwise unattractive room becomes an oasis of repose amid the turmoil of a fretful world."

Of course the waiter's life is a trying and arduous one. There is much worry by thoughtless clients. There are disappointments, and swindlers, and rogues. Then the actual pedestrian exercise is not little. A waiter in a restaurant in Christiania one day provided himself with a pedometer before starting his work. According to his calculations he took rather under 100,000 steps, covering some thirty-seven miles, between 8 a.m. and 12.30 a.m. Working and walking four days a week, he calculated that he covered more than 7000 miles in a year.

Another danger is threatened by the waiter's serviette. In the *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* Professor Kron inaugurated a crusade against the napkin which the waiter flourishes as a sign of his profession, but which, in the Professor's opinion, is a deplorably unhygienic piece of linen and



should be summarily abolished in all civilized countries.

Dr. Kron notices how waiters carry this thing, now in their hands, now in their trousers pockets, and sometimes under their arm. They wipe table-tops with it, wipe glasses, knives, forks with it, wipe the manly perspiration from their brows and the beer froth from their lips. No civilized man should tolerate its presence, and the Professor closes his article with the war-cry, "Away with the waiter's napkin!" The Professor, it will be noticed, refers to the "rough" waiter only, and not to the civilized kind. He also fails to suggest a substitute for the serviette.

In a book entitled "Trouble in the Balkans" Mr. J. L. C. Booth says of Athenian waiters: "Robbery among the Greeks is not a cultivated art; it is a gift. They are all born with it. There is only one known method of getting square with an Athenian waiter, and that is to dine twice at the same place, near the door. You pay the first night."

Enough of Waiters, however; let us to a



more congenial, if allied topic, the edible Snail.

It is surely quite superfluous to enter upon any defence of Snails as an article of food. If you like them, well, you like them. If you do not, then you probably detest them. No one ever just tolerated snails. There is good historical precedent, as shall be shown hereafter, for their systematic cultivation. They are most nutritious, containing, it is alleged, twice the amount of proteid possessed by the oyster. Be that as it may, they have been a desirable article of food for many centuries past.

Paris, according to the "Figaro," consumes eight hundred thousand kilogrammes of snails annually. High though this figure is, it will probably be exceeded, for, after having been in disgrace for some time, the *escargot* has reconquered the favour of the gourmets.

Burgundy and the two departments of Savoy are the great sources of supply. There they are bought for 8 fr. or 9 fr. the thousand. The interesting molluscs are first sent to Auxerre, whence they are resold



to Paris as coming from the vines of Macon and Dijon.

A number of intelligent speculators also practise the breeding of snails, which they place in parks enclosed in fences made of smoothly planed planks covered with tar to prevent their climbing out and escaping.

Snails, too, play a very important part in our ordinary daily food, although the snail-hater would scoff at the idea. But it is even so. What think you imparts to South Down and Dartmoor mutton its fine flavour and highly nutritive properties? Snails! The grass upon which they feed teems with small snails of the *Helix caperata* species, and these, with or without the will of the sheep, form part of the diet of the latter, taken with the grass.

The Burgundy snail, however, has become more and more scarce during the past few seasons. The Council General of the Department of the Côte d'Or seriously took up the question, and asked the Prefect of the department to authorize a close time for snails between 15 April and 15 June. The Prefect replied that he had no power



to make such an order, as the snail was not game. The Council thereupon voted a protest, and expressed the hope that the snail might rank in the category of game, and be accorded a close time.

The French sportsman's category of game is tolerably wide, and includes birds which we do not rightly understand under that generic title. Still, to include snails as game seems a trifle—well, far-fetched. It would be difficult to shoot snails, save with a pop-gun at perhaps six feet. It might be easier to stalk them. After all, we have a close time for oysters, which are not much more game-like than snails. The point for France surely is not whether snails should rank as reptiles or insects, vermin or cattle, but whether they are worth preserving. And the Burgundy snail is.

In the time of Pliny, we are told, a concoction of snails beaten up in warm water was recommended for coughs. The Romans were very fond of snails, which they fattened in special "*cochlearia*," feeding them with bran soaked in wine until they attained quite large dimensions. Charles the Fifth



of Spain died of indigestion brought on by eating immoderately of snails.

Mrs. Delaney, writing in 1758, says :  
“Two or three Snails should be boiled in the barley-water which Mary takes, who coughs at night. She must know nothing of it. They give no manner of taste.”

The first importation of Snails into England has been attributed to Sir Kenelm Digby (1645) for his wife. Also the apple snail was brought to the South Downs of Surrey and Sussex, as well as to Box Hill in the sixteenth century, by one of the Earls of Arundel for his Countess, who dressed and ate them to promote the cure of consumption, from which she suffered.

Snails did not really come into French vogue until the return of Louis XVIII, in 1814, on which occasion the Bishop of Autun entertained the Emperor Alexander of Russia. The popular host, who was a famous gastronome, had in his service a most accomplished cook, the best in Paris at that time ; they put their heads together and hit upon Snails as the most suitable novelty for presenting to the imperial guest.



Together with this dish, which was handed round, there appeared on the card under the heading *Escargots à la Bourignonne* a description of the delicious seasoning with which each shell was filled up.

In 1854, M. de la Marr, of Paris, set forth the virtues of *Helicin* as a glutinous extract obtained from snails, and which had long been given in broth as a successful domestic remedy for pulmonary phthisis.

Gipsies are great snail eaters, but they first starve these gasteropods, which are given to devour poisonous plants, and must be rendered free from the same, for it is certain that Snails retain for a time the flavour and odour of the vegetables on which they feed.

The above most interesting particulars may be read, at greater length, in a compendious and reliable work, entitled "Meals Medicinal," by Dr. W. T. Fernie.

There is an increasing export of Snails from England to America. As many as ten thousand are packed in a cask, of which hundreds are shipped annually. But there is and always has been a large home con-



sumption, particularly in certain counties. In some Gloucestershire towns they quite outclass whelks and winkles as a snack to accompany a glass of beer, and they are commonly hawked by the basket, cooked ready for eating, round the public-houses. Snail broth or stewed snails is a well-known and thoroughly approved rural remedy for consumption, and indeed all chest complaints. In Hampshire, to help weak eyes, snails are made into a poultice with soaked bread-crusts. The glass men at Newcastle have a Snail Feast once a year. They collect the snails in the fields and hedgerows on the Sunday before the anniversary, and their wives wash, clean, and stuff them according to established tradition. According to the authority of Mr. F. H. Elsey, librarian of the Surrey Archæological Society, the edible snail, *Helix pomatia*, was most probably introduced into this country by the Romans from Gaul. It is not peculiar to Surrey, for it is found in Kent; and Sowerby, in his "Illustrated Index of British Shells," gives the southern chalky districts. It is no doubt confined to these by the large size of its



shell, requiring the secretion of lime for its formation. This snail hibernates from October to April in a subterranean burrow.

It has been said this snail was brought to this country from Italy by Thomas, Earl of Arundel (Earl Marshal). "His lady," says Salmon, "delighting in such food." Evelyn remarks that "this huge and fleshy snail was had in delicias by the Earl himself." Mr. Elsey entirely agrees with Lieut.-Col. Godwin-Austen, the well-known authority upon mollusca, that the snail was here long before the Earl of Arundel's time.

Two very fine shells of this snail, one measuring  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. long,  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. broad, and  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. high, can be seen in the Surrey Archæological Museum, Castle Arch, Guildford. These two specimens were found by Mr. Elsey a few years ago just below where Mr. W. P. Trench's house is built adjoining the Echo Pits, Guildford, in a hedge now grubbed up.

There is a suggestion in Spenser that the edible snail is the poor man's oyster, and Dr. Yeo confirms this. Some little while ago Canon Horsley strongly recommended



the more general adoption of snails as an article of food, although he naively admitted that he had never eaten one himself. Thereupon the "Lancet" said: "There is nothing to be said against the proposal from a dietetic point of view; the snail is both nutritious and tasty." The professional journal goes on to say:—

"The snail has been called 'the poor man's oyster,' though we do not remember to have seen it eaten raw. We know, however, that it makes an excellent fish sauce, and may be used for the same purpose as oyster sauce. Possibly also a few snails in a steak-and-kidney pudding would increase the tastiness of this popular food.

"Care must be exercised in the choice of the snail for food purposes, as it is well known that snails feed on poisonous plants, and it is the custom in France to allow a few days to elapse after they have been taken from their feeding ground, in order that any poisonous matters may be eliminated.

"According to analysis, very nearly 90 per cent of the solid matter of the snail is pro-



teid matter, available directly for repairing the tissues of the body.

“Besides this, there is about 6 per cent of fat and 4 per cent of mineral matter, including phosphates.”

According to an excellent gastronomic authority, the best snails in Paris are to be found at Prunier's, in the Rue Duphot, near the Madeleine. He boils his snails in a liquid which is partly composed of good white wine, with a little garlic and bay leaves, thyme, onions, and carrots in it. The snails are served in small silver bowls, and the weapon of offence is a two-pronged silver fork. The first time that one holds a long black steaming thing on a fork, and hesitates whether to put it into one's mouth or not, is rather a strange moment.

Most people who try the experiment of snail-eating take the snail out of their mouths quicker than they put it in. Burgundy is the correct wine to drink with your snails.

The Hungarian manner of cooking snails is, after the boiling and cleaning, to cut them small, mix them with chopped-up



anchovies, and to serve them hot on hot toast, a squeeze of lemon and a dash of red pepper giving the dish its final touches. The curiosity of the Hungarian method of cooking and serving the snails is that no man, unless he was told, would know what he was eating.

Francatelli, in his "Modern Cook," strongly recommends snails, and gives a method of cooking them, nearly akin to the usual French way. In fact, nearly all foreign cookery books give one or more recipes, either as broth, stew, or *à la Bourignou*.

The "London Gazette" of 23 March, 1739, tells us that "Mrs. Joanna Stephens received from the Government five thousand pounds for revealing the secret of her famous cure for stone in the bladder. This consisted chiefly of egg shells and Snails, mixed with Soap, Honey, and Herbs." Rather earlier than this date "Lady Honeywood's Snail Water" was much used for complaints of the chest.

Defoe, writing in 1722, described a cook-shop "where you may bespeak a dinner for four or five shillings a head up to a guinea



or what sum you will"; one of the items being "a ragout of fatted snails."

Has any literary critic ever noticed the curious similarity between a verse of Sir John Suckling and Robert Herrick, who were, of course, contemporaries? I am reminded of it because *Snails* are used by the latter where *Mice* are referred to by the former.

In Sir John Suckling's "Ballad upon a Wedding," everybody knows the lines:—

Her feet beneath her petticoat  
Like little mice stole in and out.

In Robert Herrick's poem, "On Her Feet," occurs this verse:—

Her pretty feet like snails, did creep  
A little out, and then  
As if they played at bo-peep,  
Did soon draw in again.

The comparison is interesting.

Quite recently a case brought under the Workmen's Compensation Act in Paris revealed the existence of a hitherto unknown industry. This was none other than the manufacture of artificial snails.



The evidence showed that a workman had had a finger broken by a machine whose object was to cut boiled calves' lights into portions shaped like a small corkscrew for insertion into the empty shells of snails which had been thrown into dustbins after their contents had been consumed, and thence gathered by the *chiffonniers*, or rag-pickers, and sold to the proprietor of the factory. The revelation caused a sensation of horror among the Parisian population, for whom the succulent snail is a delicious delicacy partaken of on all occasions of festivity, and purchased at prices ranging from 6d. to 8d. per dozen. It was stated by the injured workman that by the substitution of calves' lights the fabricated "snails" could be sold at the factory at 2d. a dozen.

The small horticultural speculator in Germany has of late years been taking a leaf from the book of his neighbours, and become an ardent cultivator of the luscious edible snail, a delicacy Hans is now as assiduous in tending for ultimate sale in the market as ever was Jacques Bonhomme.



July is considered the best month for collecting this gasteropodous mollusc prior to fattening him for his final appearance in the shape of a dainty parsley-and-butter-bespat-tered *bonne bouche* for some "good liver" in Berlin or elsewhere.

These large white snails come from the vineyards principally about the Rhine and the Moselle ; the breeder for gastronomic purposes, however, confines his little flock, when once secured from amid the umbrageous vines, to a special little "run" of their own, where henceforth their whole duty consists in "doing themselves well." The "run" is fixed up on a sunny stretch of lawn, hemmed in with boards upon which is smeared clay mixed with vinegar and salt and water—so as to prevent any crawling out of bounds.

In the United States edible snails are frequently to be seen exposed for sale ; but they are not raised in that country, and those on sale have been shipped to America alive from Europe.

In Vienna, again, during Lent there is a snail market, the snails coming in barrels



from Swabia. The great centre for the consumption of snails, however, is Paris and some of the French provinces. There is, indeed, a very large trade in this commodity in France, the large white snail being in special demand in Paris, while the garden and wood snails are in common use among poorer consumers in all parts of France.

The collecting of snails is carried on in the French provinces all day long by men, women, and children, who with iron hooks search for them at the foot of thorn hedges and under ivy, and in winter in old walls. If lucky, a good searcher will collect from one thousand to fifteen hundred snails. These are paid for according to their weight, about a thousand snails averaging ten kilogrammes, and the payment varies with the prices current in the Paris market, but it usually ranges from twenty to forty centimes per kilo. The work, therefore, cannot be said to be well paid.

A curious superstition existed for many years with regard to the Snail in Southern Germany. Practically all snail shells have their volutes or spirals (*Helix*—a snail—a



screw—a spiral) twisting from right to left. Once in about twenty thousand snails the twist is found to be from left to right. This snail was then dubbed “The Snail King,” and was sold at a fancy price as an amulet or luck-bringer. It would be curious to know whether this custom has been noticed elsewhere.

In a biography of Adam Smith, by Francis W. Hirst, a nice snail story is told of Professors Black and Hutton, the fathers of the modern sciences of modern chemistry and modern geology.

It so chanced that Black and Hutton had held some discourse together upon the folly of abstaining from feeding on the crustaceous creatures of the land, when those of the sea were considered as delicacies. Snails were known to be nutritious and wholesome, even “sanative” in some cases. The epicures of ancient Rome enumerated the snails of Lucca among the richest and rarest delicacies, and the modern Italians still held them in esteem. So a gastronomic experiment was resolved on. The snails were procured, dieted for a time, then stewed.



“A huge dish of snails was placed before them ; but philosophers are but men after all ; and the stomachs of both doctors began to revolt against the proposed experiment. Nevertheless, if they looked with disgust on the snails, they retained their awe for each other ; so that each, conceiving the symptoms of internal revolt peculiar to himself, began with infinite exertion to swallow in very small quantities the mess which he loathed. Dr. Black at length ‘showed the white feather,’ but in a very delicate manner, as if to sound the opinion of his messmate. ‘Doctor,’ he said, in his precise and quiet style, ‘Doctor, do you not think that they taste a little—a very little green ?’ ‘D——d green, d——d green indeed ! ‘Tak’ them awa’—tak’ them awa !’ vociferated Dr. Hutton, starting up from the table and giving full vent to his feelings.”

As a final tribute to the usefulness of the Snail, it may not be generally known that they are matchless as window cleaners.

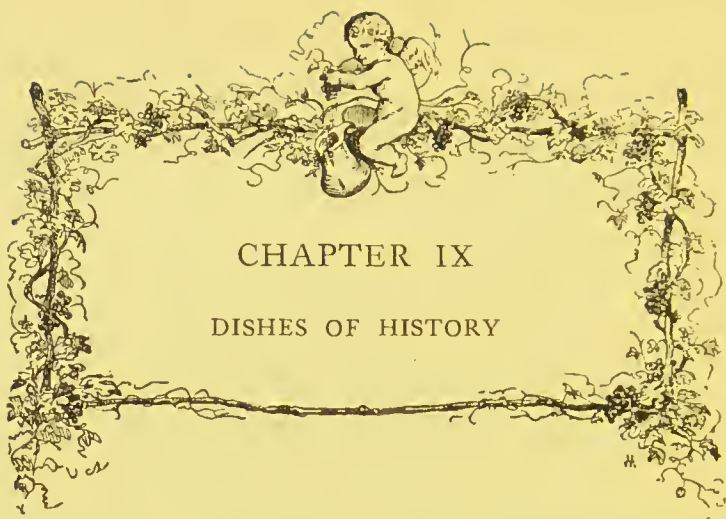
An old coloured woman selling snails occasionally makes her appearance in certain streets in Philadelphia. She carries an old



basket in which the snails repose on freshly sprinkled leaves. These are not sold as food, but for cleaning the outside of window-panes. The snail is damped and placed upon the glass, where it at once moves around and devours all insects and foreign matter, leaving the pane as bright and clear as crystal. There are old-established business places in Philadelphia where the upper windows, when cleaned at all, are always cleaned by snails. There is also a fine market for snails among the owners of aquariums, as they keep the glass clean and bright.







## CHAPTER IX

### DISHES OF HISTORY

“Only a pomegranate is he who, when he gapes his mouth, displays the contents of his heart.”

JAPANESE PROVERB.

HISTORY and cookery are linked together so closely that a study of the one science implies, or should imply, a study of the other. For the best part of a century and a half the notable names of contemporary history are allied to dishes which perpetuated their glory and have come down to us as ornaments alike of the monarchy and the menu.

The period is of course that of the fourteenth and fifteenth Louis of France, and for several (mainly esoteric) reasons that brilliant and fascinating age produced



most of the classic dishes of high cookery, dishes which have become, so to say, *standardized*, and which every chef who respects the traditions of his art serves, or ought to serve, in precisely the same manner in which they were designed by their original inventors.

The average diner, when he sees on the menu of his Māsonic banquet, his annual Mansion House dinner, or his City Company feast, the name of some historic celebrity tacked on to the roast, the entrée or the sweet, reckes little of its origin and inner meaning. To him it is just something to be eaten, nothing more or less. And yet, if the chef be competent, properly trained, and alive to his educational responsibilities, these dishes have each their own story, their own interest, and their own special and peculiar virtue.

Take as an instance *Côtelettes de Mouton à la Maintenon*. These succulent dainties perpetuate for all time the memory of a lady, who, whatsoever her faults, was at least charming, interesting, and something more than passing fair. When the *Grand Monarque*



became queasy and past his prime, Madame invented, out of her own powdered head, these cutlets, which in their envelopes of paper (*en papillotes*) guarded the royal digestion against the evils of too much grease. Again, *Cailles à la Mirepoix* owe their origin to the Marshal of that name; *Poulardes à la Montmorency* were actually first cooked by the Duke de Montmorency; *Petites Bouchées à la Reine* are called after Maria Leczinska, wife of Louis Quinze; and *filets de Volaille à la Bellevue* were evolved for the King by the Pompadour, who excelled in the dainty manipulation of her silver *batterie de cuisine*.

The Regent Orleans is responsible for *pain à la d'Orléans*, a very light and digestible form of bread; and his daughter, the Duchesse de Berri, first conceived and executed those delightful morsels *filets de lapereau à la Berri*. The Duchess de Villeroy, afterwards Maréchale de Luxembourg, a brilliant light of the Court of the fifteenth Louis, thought out, cooked, and christened the *poulets à la Villeroy*, which remain, and deservedly so, a toothsome and delightful



dish, even unto this day. The *Chartreuse à la Mauconseil* is called after the Marquise of that name; and the *Vol-au-Vent à la Nesle*, which is still often met with, though not always classically cooked, derives its name from the Marquis de Nesle (not he of the Tower), who refused a peerage "to remain premier marquis of France."

In rather earlier days the Marquis de Béchamel invented a cream sauce for turbot and cod which still, if somewhat perverted, perpetuates his name. *Gigot à la Mailly* was the result of profound study on the part of the first mistress of Louis XV, who by her culinary art attempted, and succeeded, in alienating the royal affection from her own sister, who was an undesirable rival. *Soupe à la Condé* was, in later years, called after the famous cousin of Louis XVIII; and the Prince de Soubise, notorious under Louis XV for giving great dinners, and paying nobody but his cooks and the young ladies of the opera, lent his name, through his cook, Bertrand, to the onion sauce which we still hold dear.

French cooks of the seventeenth and



eighteenth centuries who did honour to their employers by christening magnificent creations after them only copied previous Apician artists, who, according to the "De Opsoniis," named their inventions after Varro, Julius Matius, Julius Fronto, Celsinius, Vitellius, Commodus, and Didius Julianus. But the chefs of the golden age of cookery also delighted to honour men of comparatively humble station who took a keen and semi-professional interest in the art of *la gueule*, as Montaigne calls it.

There was, for instance, a certain *petit abbé*, *le père Douillet*, to whom much honour is done in those four delightful volumes of cook-lore entitled "Les Soupers de la Cour." They were published in 1755, and were written or compiled by one Manon, a literary cook of the period to whom reference has already been made. The *abbé* appears to have been much appreciated by the author, for his books contain delectable recipes for *Poulets*, *Brochet*, *Merlans*, *Cailles*, and *Champignons*, all *au Père Douillet*, not, it will be noticed, *à la* (*manière de*) *Père Douillet*, but just *au Père Douillet*, a rare and great distinction.



The best-known official cooks of Louis XV were Moustier and Vincent de la Chapelle. The latter is responsible for a very serious and noteworthy cookery book which has never lacked honour in its own and other countries. De la Gorse mentions a dinner given by the King, at St. Hubert, where all the dishes were prepared by the distinguished guests, such as the Prince de Beaufreumont, the Marquis de Polignac, the Duke de Goutant, the Duke d'Ayen, the Duke de Coigny, and the Duke de la Vallière; the King himself contributed a *Poularde au Basilic*.

Such a famous gourmet as Richelieu naturally has left his mark in culinary literature. We have the *Chartreuse à la Cardinal*, *Boudin de poulet à la Richelieu*, *Gigot à la Richelieu*, and many more. The rather famous *potage à la Camerani*, a most excellent concoction, is called after a notability of that name, to whom Grimod de la Reynière dedicated volume one of his immortal "Almanach des Gourmands," as "one of the most erudite epicures of France."

King Stanislas Leszcynski of Poland in-



vented the *Baba* to make amends for the harshness of his own name, which the French tongue found hard to pronounce. Its original ingredients were German yeast, flour, butter, eggs, cream, sugar, saffron, candied peel, raisins, currants, and Madeira, Malaga, or rum. According to Brillat-Savarin, the *Baba* is especially beloved by women; "it renders her more plastic, and man more expansive—only to look at it the eyes laugh and the heart sings."

Who thinks nowadays of the battle when he degustates *Poulet à la Marengo*? And yet nothing is more authentic than its inception on that memorable occasion. The battle occurred, it may be remembered, on 14 June, 1800. Napoleon had, naturally, a somewhat hurried meal. There was no butter in camp, but plenty of sound olive oil. So the *casserole* was bottomed with oil, to which was added the garlic and the mignonette. The fowl was then moistened with white wine and garnished with sippets of toast, mushrooms, and morels, in default of truffles. The result was pronounced to be exquisite. Nowadays we omit the mignonette and sub-



stitute a bay leaf, thyme, and parsley; garlic is thought to be too strong, so we use shalot; the mushrooms are still permitted, but we ignore the morels. And so we have the *Poulet à la Marengo*.

Literature has been honoured by Carême in his *Soupe à la Lamartine*, history in *Potage à la Dumesnil*, philosophy in *Purée Buffon*, and just before the death of the great artist he invented a vegetable soup which he christened *Soupe à la Victor Hugo*. This same cook paid the doctor who cured him of indigestion by dedicating to him his *Perche à la Gaubert*. In rather later years we find a *Poularde à la George Sand* invented by Azéma, formerly chef at Prince's. It is stewed in white wine, flavoured with crayfish butter and tails, truffles and olives, with a garnishing of *feuilletage*.

The stage is ever prominent in gastro-nomic annals; it must suffice to mention *Filets de Sole à la Belle Otero*, *Pêche Melba*, *Croustades à la Coquelin*, *Salade Rachel*, and *Consommé Sarah Bernhardt*, all of which are nowadays fairly standard dishes.

Although no man was ever more sus-



ceptible to flattery and adulation than Alexandre Dumas (*père*), yet there were marked degrees in the way in which he accepted such complimentary tribute and homage, varying from the mere *merci, mon cher*, in reply to congratulations on a recently published book, to a cordial embrace and the swearing of an everlasting friendship to the man who praised his cooking.

Dumas's partiality for travelling and hunting developed his culinary instincts, and he has related in his "Journey through Spain" how dire necessity suggested to him the excellence of salad mixed without oil or vinegar. References to cookery are scattered here and there all through his works, particularly in his "Impressions de Voyage," and again in his "Propos d'Art et de Cuisine," wherein occurs the famous "Causerie Culinaire," embodying the recipe for "macaroncello" and the delightful address to his readers, "Je prie Dieu qu'il vous tienne en bon appétit, vous conserve en bon estomac, et vous garde de faire de la littérature."

The author of "An Englishman in Paris"



describes how he watched Dumas cook a whole dinner, consisting of "soupe aux choux," a wonderful carp, "ragout de mouton à la hongroise," "rôti de faisans," and a "salade japonaise." He adds: "I never dined like that before or after—not even a week later, when Dr. Véron and Sophie made the *amende honorable* in the Rue Taitbout."

In the kitchen, as in the theatre, the great novelist was master of all difficulties. He delighted to make a triumph of an opportunity of which others would only have made a failure. For himself he would have been content with a couple of eggs; but if, as he wrote, he heard the cook complaining, "What shall I do? There are twenty to dinner this evening, and I have only three tomatoes left for my sauce! It is impossible!" then the master would lift his head and cry, "Let me see what I can do!"

So saying, he would rush headlong into the kitchen just as he was in his usual working dress, with his shirt-sleeves rolled up above his elbows, and calling everybody in the place round him to watch his prowess,



he would labour among the stewpans for a good hour, ordering all those who had followed him to the kitchen to different menial tasks—one to slice the carrots, one to peel potatoes, one to chop up herbs—turning them all into scullions in fact.

The blustering, boisterous genius as easily dominated the kitchen as he did the literary world of the time. His cooking was energy and bustle personified. Meat and butter were mingled with fine wines in the saucepans, half a dozen sauces were being watched in the *bain-marie*, and all the while he was cracking jokes and laughing at them most loudly himself.

It was a wonderful and inspiring sight, and, as may be imagined, Dumas seasoned the conversation as well as the dishes with the spice of his wit and humour. No matter how serious his thoughts had been a few moments before, it seemed as if the atmosphere of the kitchen had the power to dissipate them. He forgot all his ever-present cares, and was radiant with grease and hilarity.

Then suddenly, without the slightest



warning, he would utter a melodramatic scream and rush out of the kitchen to his study. He had remembered the final *dénouement* of a scene he had left unfinished. He would reinstate himself at his writing-table and take up the thread of the story as if no interruption whatever had occurred. Many a dish that delighted his guests was cooked in this extraordinary fashion, between two thrilling chapters, and the wonderful part about his culinary work was that the very dishes and ingredients seemed in some unaccountable way to accommodate themselves to his casual and erratic manner. What would have been utterly ruined under any other chef seemed to succeed even extra well under his neglect.

Lacroix (*le bibliophile Jacob*) said of him : "Assuredly it is a great attainment to be a romancist, but it is by no means a mediocre glory to be a cook. Romancist or cook, Dumas is a chef, and the two vocations appear in him to go hand in hand, or, rather, to be joined in one."

Dumas often said, "When I have time I shall write a cookery book." This was to



be the crowning work of his literary career. He was constantly enumerating the vast sums which he alleged had been offered to him by various publishing houses for the right to produce this *magnum opus*.

It is not generally known that in the agreement which he made with the brothers Michael Lévy, in connexion with the rights of reproduction of his works already written and those that he had contracted to write in the future, he made the single exception of the famous forthcoming cookery book.

The great work "La Grande Dictionnaire de la Cuisine," of 1152 pages, was eventually written in 1869; the manuscript was delivered to the publisher, Alphonse Lemerre, in 1870, and whilst the book was in the press the author died and the Franco-Prussian War broke out.

Its publication was therefore delayed until 1873, when it appeared with a dedication to D. J. Vuillemot, a noted *bôtelier*, who had managed the Café de la France, and had then opened on his own account, in 1862, a restaurant near the Madeleine, which proved a most disastrous failure. He



had been previously the proprietor of the Hôtel de la Cloche et de la Bouteille at Compiègne. Dumas had made his acquaintance when hunting in the vicinity, and was afterwards in the habit of taking refuge with him when he wanted to be undisturbed in his literary work.

The arrest of some of the personages in "Monte Cristo" takes place at Vuillemot's hotel, and Dumas christened after him the famous *Lapin à la Vuillemot*, which, he says, "You must absolutely have killed yourself."

The great dictionary is perhaps something of a disappointment. It is laboured, unspontaneous, and, save in the characteristic preface, hardly worthy of its illustrious author. Nevertheless it is vast in its comprehensiveness, for, besides every imaginable dish, old and new, of the so-called legitimate cuisine, it includes receipts for lambs' tails *glacées à la chicorée*, elephants' feet, fillets of kangaroo flesh, snails *à la Provençale*, and directions as to the right treatment of the *babiroussa*, or wild Asian pig.

Contrary to his usual custom elsewhere,



Dumas gives full credit to the other culinary authors whom he quotes, and he includes recipes from such acknowledged authorities as Brébant, Grimod de la Reynière, Magny, Grignon, Carême, Véfour, and others.

He gives thirty-one methods of cooking carp, and sixteen for treating artichokes. There is to be found also the Javanese formula for cooking halcyons' nests, and an elaborate essay on the hocco.

The appendix consists of the celebrated "Etude sur la Moutarde," which is a most flagrant *réclame* of *la maison Bornibus*, but is amusing for its sheer effrontery and impudence. There was always something colossal about the man, even when he wrote about mustard.

In Molière's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" (Act iv. sc. 1), in the scene between Dorante and Dorimène, we find this delightful passage :—

"Si Damis s'en était mêlé, tout serait dans les règles ; il y aurait partout de l'élégance et de l'érudition, et il ne manquerait pas de vous exagérer lui-même toutes les pièces du repas qu'il vous donnerait, et de vous faire



tomber d'accord de sa haute capacité dans la science des bons morceaux ; de vous parler d'un pain de rive à biseau doré, relevé de croûte partout, croquant tendrement sous la dent ; d'un vin à sève veloutée, armé d'un verre qui n'est point trop commandant ; d'un carré de mouton gourmandé de persil ; d'une longe de veau de rivière, longue comme cela, blanche, délicate, et qui, sous les dents, est une vraie pâte d'amande ; de perdrix relevées d'un fumet surprenant ; et pour son opéra, d'une soupe à bouillon perlé, soutenue d'un jeune gros dindon, cantonnée de pigeonneaux et couronnée d'oignons mariés avec de la chicorée."

From this dinner-programme the taste of the day may fairly be gauged, and it will not be forgotten that it is in this immortal play that the famous line occurs :—

Je vis de bonne soupe, et non de beau langage ;  
which is so often quoted and misquoted.

But cooks are a trying and troublesome race, with extraordinarily perverse traditions of their own, a frequent antipathy to learn anything new, and an absolutely ridiculous



partiality to "improve" old-fashioned dishes according to their own ideas. There ought to be condign punishment meted out to any cook who makes any so-called alteration or improvement to any well-known standardized dish, of which the composition, flavour, and artistic completeness have been settled once and for all, and to touch which is something akin to sacrilege.

Really good, intelligent, careful cooks get on in their profession, and often end up by opening establishments of their own. Many a restaurant proprietor has qualified as a first-class chef.

Does any one, by the way, know the origin of the word "restaurant"? You may search your encyclopædia in vain; but the matter is really as simple as shelling peas. The first public eating-house, as distinct from the *rôtisseur*, who cooked food "to be eaten off the premises," was opened in Paris by a cook called Boulanger in 1750. Over his shop he displayed a sign bearing this inscription in kitchen Latin: "Venite omnes qui stomacho laboretis, et ego restaurabo vos." This was taken up, gallicized, and



passed into common parlance. Hence our modern use of the term, which, after all, is only a hundred and fifty years old.

In rereading an old book by the never-to-be-forgotten Guy de Maupassant I came across a delightful passage which so aptly describes the feelings of a true gourmet that I am tempted to transcribe it here for the benefit of all who belong to that noble fraternity. "To be wanting in the sense of taste is to have a stupid mouth, just as one may have a stupid mind. A man who cannot distinguish between a langouste and a lobster, between a herring—that admirable fish that carries within it all the savours and aromas of the sea—and a mackerel or a whiting, is comparable only to a man who could confound Balzac with Eugène Sue, and a symphony by Beethoven with a military march composed by some regimental bandmaster."

This delicacy of taste was obviously denied to Mr. G. Bernard Shaw's Uncle James in "Man and Superman," of whom it is written :—

"Uncle James had a first-rate cook ; he couldn't digest anything except what she



cooked. Well, the poor man was shy and hated society. But his cook was proud of her skill, and wanted to serve up dinners to princes and ambassadors. To prevent her from leaving him, that poor old man had to give a big dinner twice a month, and suffer agonies of awkwardness."

Another writer of to-day, of quite peculiar charm and knowledge, Mr. E. H. Cooper, in his novel "A Fool's Year," has a delightful description of a modern London dinner-party, of the sort too often met with in the houses of those who ought to know so much better.

"Mr. Hopper's dinner was a thing to be remembered rather than eaten. 'The things ought to be put into a museum of curiosities,' said St. Ives, looking round him wearily; 'not on a decent English dinner-table. I've had some turtle-soup and a bit of tongue smothered in jam, and now I'm hungry. Would there be a row if I sent for some bread and cheese? Strawberries as big as peaches, and peaches as big as young footballs, may be very remarkable to look at, but I'm not going to eat them. That



waiter looks kind ; I'm going to ask him to bring me a piece of Stilton hidden between two biscuits. Don't give me away, Lady Merton. I'll do you a good turn when I find you starving at a banquet of this kind. But you know better than to come to one without eating a couple of muffins and half a pound of plum-cake first.' ”

The clamour as to the inefficiency of the typical “ plain cook ” is incessant and fully justified. The remedies suggested are usually futile or inexpedient. Nothing is more difficult than to get a simple meal well cooked. Nothing is more easy, in London at any rate, than to get a misdescribed semi-French dinner evilly cooked. Is there no way out of this quandary ? Yes. It consists in the training and apprenticing of British-born boys to the profession of cookery.

For many years past all the leading men-cooks in clubs, restaurants, and large private establishments have been, practically without exception, foreigners, whether French, Swiss, or Italian.

In Braithwaite's “ Rules and Orders for the Government of the House of an Earl,”



published in the seventeenth century, the author writes : "In ancient times noblemen contented themselves to be served with such as had been bred in their own houses, but of late times none could please some but Italians and Frenchmen."

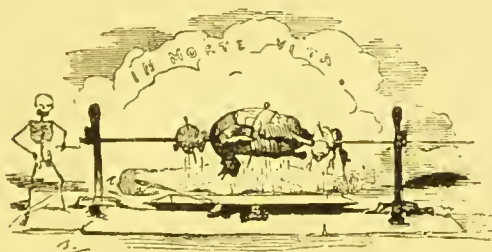
It is much the same in our own day. The profession of cookery among Britons has died out, and, as a result, we are fed, outside our own homes, by scores of intelligent, well-educated, practised foreign cooks, who do their work, for the most part, excellently, but who could be replaced in time by the genuine home-trained article.

Although France, and particularly the Midi, has produced the greatest cooks, there is no reason why England should lag behind. It is certain that many purely insular dishes, such as Irish stew, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, tripe and onions, and such-like, can never be properly cooked by foreigners. They have not the tradition, and are too anxious to impart their own personal touch to the dish.

It is quite true that a really great chef is as rare as a really great poet or a really



great general. But there is a lesser grade of thoroughly competent chef who may most certainly be evolved from the well-educated middle-class boy of to-day. The efforts of the Food and Cookery Association of London towards this end should be actively supported by all those who are interested in the nationalization of the kitchen and the reform of our digestion.







## CHAPTER X

### LENTEN FARE

#### *Festina lente*

THE most strenuous Lenten faster on record was, I venture to think, St. Macarius, who was annually in the habit of passing forty days and forty nights in a standing position with no more substantial support than a few raw cabbage-leaves on each recurring Sunday.

Simeon Stylites was even more abstemious, for he ate nothing from the beginning to the end of Lent, passing his time in praying and bowing from his columnar elevation. An admiring monk has placed it upon record that, possibly by way of assuaging the pangs of hunger, Simeon made on one day twelve hundred and forty-four separate and distinct bows.



It is doubtless an excellent thing to have the strength of mind and body to be able to act up to one's convictions. We should find it difficult to realize the idea of a Bishop of London never breaking his fast till the evening, and then being satisfied with a solitary egg, an inch of bread, and a cup of milk and water ; such, however, was the daily Lenten fare of St. Cedd, a predecessor of Dr. Winnington Ingram in the Metropolitan diocese.

It is told of St. Francis of Assisi that he ate nothing dressed by fire, unless he were very ill, and even then he caused it to be covered with ashes, or dipped into cold water. His common daily food was dry bread strewn with ashes, but—the historian adds—he did not condemn his followers to the rigorous diet which he himself observed. “Brother Ass,” as he familiarly called that self, was, in his own opinion, worthy of no better fare.

But there is another and lighter side to the picture. The Roman Catholic Church, especially the upper classes thereof, in long bygone times, did not always submit



patiently to the stricter ethics of fasting. Kings and princes used to send medical and theological certificates to the Pope, begging humbly to be allowed to eat meat. The Holy Father was even begged to adjudicate on individual dishes. Pope Zacharias forbade roast hare. Under Pope John XXII the Franciscans were much vexed as to whether they really owned the soup that they ate, or whether they only had the bare *usufruct* thereof. As only three or four of them were burned as martyrs, and no thrones were upset nor provinces ravaged, Voltaire termed these debates about niceties of diet *des sottises paisibles*.

In the reign of Henry VIII the minutes of the Lenten dinner included such fish as : a whole ling, great jowls of salt salmon, great salt eels, great jowls of salt sturgeon, fresh ling, fresh turbot, great pike, great jowls of fresh salmon, great rudds, baked turbots, salmon chines, roasted lampreys and roasted lamprons, great burbutts, and —when the fishing season was favourable — porpoise, sea-wolf, grampus, and whale.



A fairly compendious epitome of fish-food, but information is lacking as to the modes of preparation.

The most sensible remark on the fasting question was probably made by Erasmus, who said, when he was asked why he did not fast: "My mind is Catholic, but my stomach is Lutheran." But then Erasmus was a very broad-minded sort of person. It is only necessary to read the finest novel in the English language, Charles Reade's "Cloister and the Hearth," to realize that fact.

For the dozenth time I was rereading "Eothen" the other day, and came upon a curious passage. Speaking of Smyrna, Kinglake says: "The number of murders committed during Lent is greater, I am told, than at any other time of the year. A man under the influence of a bean dietary (for this is the principal food of the Greeks during their fasts) will be in an apt humour for enriching the shrine of his saint, and passing a knife through his next-door neighbour." *Que Messieurs les végétériens commencent !* What do they say to this ? Do they



feel especially bloodthirsty during Lent, or —being all-the-year-round vegetarians—do they lust after gore with any peculiar avidity?

It is curious to note that our favourite Lenten fare, salted cod and egg-sauce, to wit, is, strictly speaking, quite wrong. Eggs are not permissible food, and the orthodox eschew them altogether during their *jejunium*.

In Spain, during the crusades and the war with the Moors, a practice arose of permitting, in certain cases, the substitution of a contribution to the holy war for the observance of the Lenten abstinence, and although the object has long since ceased, the composition is still permitted under the same title of *Cruzada*.

In the seventh century a Council sitting at Toledo declared those who ate meat during Lent to be sinners unworthy to take part in the Resurrection. From that time until the eleventh century, when a gradual reaction set in, the laws of fasting and the punishments inflicted upon the transgressors became more and more strict; interdict



and excommunication were among the penalties.

By degrees these became so numerous and different in kind that they were divided into

*Jejunium generale*—a fast binding for all.

*Consuetudinarium*—local fast.

*Penitentiale*—atonement for all transgressions.

*Votivum*—consequent upon a vow.

*Voluntare*—for the better carrying out of an undertaking.

These again were kept as

*Jejunium naturale*—an entire abstinence from food or drink.

*Abstinencia*—certain food only, but several times a day.

*Jejunium cum abstinencia*—the same food, but only once a day.

*Jejunium sine abstinencia*—all kinds of food, but only once a day.

The prohibited food on partial fast days included, during certain periods, not only the flesh of quadrupeds, fowl, and fish, but also the *lacticinia*, which means all that comes from quadrupeds and birds, such as eggs, milk, butter, and the like.



There are many allusions in old plays to those folk who do not fast through Lent. For instance, in Skelton's "Colin Clout" (1500) is the following passage :—

Men call you thereforr prophanes,  
Ye pieke no shrimps nor praness;  
Salt fish, stockfish, nor herring,  
It is not for your wearing.  
Nor in holy Lenten season,  
Ye will neither Beanes nor Peasen,  
But ye look to be let loose,  
To a pigge or to a goose.

There is comparatively little strictness now as to Lenten food, but it is always an excuse for excellent *maigre* dining, and the cook who cannot prepare a thoroughly good appetising and satisfying *maigre* menu is unworthy of his calling.

One Good Friday I was dining at a very excellent French provincial hotel, the Hôtel du Chapeau-Rouge at Dunkirk, and the following most cleverly fashioned menu confronted me at dinner :—



MENU

Huîtres.  
 Potage Longchamps.  
 Bouchées Dunkerquoises.  
 Barbue, Sauce d'Isigny.  
 Pommes Nouvelles.  
 Petit Pois à la Française.  
 Salade Primeur.  
 Saumon à la Russe.  
 Ecrevisses de la Meuse.  
 Gâteau Pitheviens.  
 Fruits.

Here is another Lenten dinner, quite different in conception, but equally good in execution. It is a very artistic little production.

MENU

Caviar d'Astrackan.  
 Bisque d'Ecrevisses.  
 Truite braisée au Clicquot.  
 Sarcelle Rôtie.  
 Salade.  
 Petits Pois nouveaux à la Française.  
 Coupe Petit Duc.  
 Corbeille de Friandises.  
 Dessert.

A few years ago a noted French gourmet



was taunted with the alleged fact that it was quite impossible to order a really expensive *maigre* dinner ; he retorted, as any sane gourmet naturally would, that it was the easiest thing in the world. He was given *carte blanche*, and the following was the result :—

Caviar frais.  
Huîtres (Natives).  
Œufs Grand-Duc.  
Bouchées Joinville.  
Truite saumonée au Chambertin.  
Sarcelles rôties.  
Salade Espérance.  
Aspic de homard en Bellevue.  
Asperges sauce Mousseline.  
Soufflé au kirsch.  
Corbeilles de fruits.  
Café.

#### VINS.

Eau-de-vie russe.  
Chablis, 1890.  
Johannisberg, 1886.  
Château-Léoville Poyferré, 1878.  
Romanée-Conti, 1865.  
Champagne frappé Baïkal (extra-dry), '84.  
Château-Yquem, 1869.  
Grande fine-champagne Napoléon, 1800.



The dinner for four was exquisite, and the wines extraordinary. The total cost was just over twenty-five pounds.

In that delightful book, "Mrs. Brookfield and Her Circle," by Charles and Frances Brookfield, there is this postscript to a letter written by the husband to his wife: "On the carte of the Carlton Club the day before yesterday (the General Fast) was to be seen these words: 'The Committee, taking into consideration that the observance of a General Fast has been ordained, have directed that the coffee-room dinner shall be confined strictly to—Two Soups. Fish. Plain Joints. Spring Tarts. Omelettes. Cheese.'"

Another story from the same book, which although it has nothing whatever to do with Lent, has, perhaps, with food and feeding, runs as follows: "The new bishop of New Zealand, in a farewell and pathetic interview with his mother, after his appointment, was thus addressed by her in such sequence as sobs and tears would permit: 'I suppose they will eat you, my dear—I try to think otherwise, but I suppose they will. Well!—We must leave it in the hands



of Providence. But if they do—mind, my dear, and disagree with them.’”

That some at least of the less abstinent monks made very hearty meals and were quite valiant trenchermen, whether it were fast day or no, is a matter of history. At a splendid dinner given by the Legate of Avignon to the Prior of Chartreux, a superb fish, cooked to perfection and likely to have tempted the Pope himself had he been present, was handed to the Prior. He helped himself and was on the eve of eating, when one of the brothers said to him: “My father, do not touch that, it is not *maigre*. I went into the kitchen, and I saw things that would make you shudder; the sauce that you fancy is made from carrots and onions is made from ham and rabbits.” “My brother, you talk too much and are too curious,” replied the father; “the kitchen is not your place, and curiosity is a grievous sin.”

Beckford of “Vathek” fame gives a glowing account of the monastery of Alcobaça, and particularly of the kitchen thereof: “Through the centre of the immense and



groined hall, not less than sixty feet in diameter, ran a brisk rivulet of the clearest water, flowing through pierced wooden reservoirs, containing every sort and size of the finest river fish. On one side loads of game and venison were heaped up ; on the other vegetables and fruit in endless variety. Beyond a long line of stores, extended a row of ovens, and close to them hillocks of wheaten flour, whiter than snow, rocks of sugar, jars of the purest oil, and pastry in vast abundance, which a numerous tribe of lay-brothers and their attendants were rolling out and puffing up into a hundred different shapes, singing all the while as blithely as larks in a cornfield." After describing the elaborate composition of the daily banquet of the monks, the author describes "a certain truffle cream which was so exquisite that the Lord Abbot piously gave thanks for it."

A famous London character in the time of "Frazer's Magazine " was Serjeant Murphy, M.P. for Cork. An acquaintance of Murphy's was constantly addicted to boasting of his aristocratic friends. At a dinner-



party where there were several Roman Catholics present, conversation centred round the subject of fasting, when the serjeant's friend struck in: "It is very strange how little the highest ranks regard fast days. I was dining at the Duke of Norfolk's on a fast day three weeks ago, and there was not a bit of fish at dinner." "I suppose," said Murphy, in the midst of the deep silence that followed, "that they had eaten it all in the dining-room."

Chaucer writes of a man who

Full many a patrich had he in mewe,  
And many a breme and many a luce in stew.

The stew was, of course, the monkish fish-pond, which has almost disappeared since the Reformation. The luce is the jack or pike of the fishermen, and is often found as a pun upon the family name of Lucy, which bears the pike as a charge. Richard de Lucie, who defended the castle of Falaise against Geoffry of Anjou, was Lord Diss in Norfolk; he was also Sheriff of Essex in the reign of Henry II, and built the castle of Ongar. Sir Richard



Lucy, Lord Chief Justice of England, founded Lesnes Priory, near Erith, and dying in 1179, was buried within its walls. An antiquary named Weever, who had seen his tomb in 1630, states that upon the belt of the figure of the knight the fleur-de-lis, or fleur-de-luce, the rebus or name device of the Lucys, was sculptured in many places. The fleur-de-lis was here used in a doubly figurative sense for a pike or spear, to the head of which it bears some resemblance.

This is more particularly shown in the Cantelupe arms, gules, a fess vair between three leopards' heads jessant fleur-de-lis. The arms of Lucy are also among the quarterings borne by the family of Lowther, the head of which is, of course, Lord Lonsdale.

Certain fish, evidently intended for pike or luses, in the pavement of the Chapter House at Westminster may possibly allude to the early tradition that St. Peter's Church was first built by King Lucius.

The ged and the pike are synonymous in North Britain, whence the Scots family of



Ged bear for arms, azure, three gedds, or pike, hauriant argent ; Sir Walter Scott alludes to this play upon the name in *Red Gauntlet*. "The heralds," he says, "who make graven images of fish, fowls, and beasts, assigned the ged for their device and escutcheon, and hewed it over their chimneys, and placed above their tombs the fish called a jack, pike, or luce, and in our tongue, a ged."

Of this family was William Ged, an Edinburgh printer, who employed a stereotyping process as early as 1725. The Geddes, a very ancient family of Tweeddale, bear for arms, gules, an escutcheon between three luces' heads coupéd argent.

Much of the good purpose of a close adherence to strict Lenten fare has no doubt been lost by our continued neglect of the manifold uses of herbs.

Amid all the talking and writing about vegetarianism very little attention seems to have been paid to the undoubted importance of the herb garden.

Our forefathers believed implicitly in the virtues of herbs, and extolled them in



prose and verse. According to one of the old Roxburghe Ballads :—

Here's pennyroyal and marygolds,  
Come, buy my nettle-tops.  
Here's water-cresses and scurvy-grass,  
Come, buy my sage of virtue, ho !  
Come, buy my wormwood and mugworts.  
Here's all fine herbs of every sort ;  
Here's southernwood that's very good,  
Dandelion and horseleek.  
Here's dragon's-tongue and wood-sorrel,  
With bear's-foot and horehound.  
Let none despise the merry, merry cries  
Of famous London Town !

Most of these formerly well-known herbs, each having its own peculiar curative quality, are nowadays practically unknown, but a reference to old John Parkinson, or the herbals of Gerard or Turner, or the "Acetaria" of John Evelyn, would readily show that they were good for the various ills to which flesh is heir. The very earliest medicaments were largely composed of herbs, and even to-day the learned prescription of a Harley Street two-guinea specialist usually contains at least one ingredient



which, under a more formal Latin name, is neither more nor less than a "garden simple" or herb.

The common marigold, for instance, which Gerard calls "the Jackanapes-on-Horse-back," was at one time much used for soups or "pottages." In Miss Edgeworth's story of "Simple Susan" she explains how the petals of marigolds were added, as the last touch, to the broth made for an invalid mother. Evelyn compares the common bugloss to the nepenthe of Homer, but adds that what we now call bugloss was not that of the ancients, but rather borage, "for the like virtue named corrago."

Smallage was, of course, simply wild celery, which Parkinson says is "somewhat like parsley, but greater, greener, and more bitter." Sweet cicely, or sweet chervil, is a kind of myrrh—"it adds a marvellous good relish to a sallet," and the roots may be preserved or candied. The genial Culpepper, in his "English Physician Enlarged" (1565), has much to say as to the astrological virtues of the different herbs, and although his ascription of plants



to their respective planets must be taken *cum grano salis*, yet he is wonderfully near the mark in many instances which he quotes as to the effect of the herb if taken as a medicine. This, for instance, is what he has to say about balm : "It is a herb of Jupiter and under Cancer, and strengthens nature much in all its actions. It causeth the mind and heart to become merry and reviveth the heart, especially of such who are overtaken in sleep, and driveth away all troublesome cares and thoughts out of the mind arising from melancholy or black choler."

Nowadays we certainly neglect herbs, although here and there an old-fashioned gardener plants his herbs from year to year. There are still quaint old herb shops in Covent Garden, where the "simples" of our grandmothers may be bought ; and there are curious customs at the Guildhall and the Old Bailey of the presentation of bunches of herbs to the presiding justices as a reminiscence of the time when their perfume was supposed to counteract the germs of plague.



It is easy to cultivate a herb garden, and amid modern "improvements" of flowers of all sorts it imparts a delightful old-world fragrance to the completeness of the pleasaunce. Moreover, herbs make the most exquisite addition to nearly every form of cookery.

Reverting to Lent and its customs, it is notable, according to old John Selden's "Table Talk" (1689), that "our meats and our sports, much of them, have relation to Church works. The coffin of our Christmas pies in shape long, is in imitation of the cratch ; our choosing kings and queens on Twelfth-night hath reference to the three kings. So, likewise, our eating of fritters, whipping of tops, roasting of herrings, Jack of Lents, etc.—they are all in imitation of Church works, emblems of martyrdom. Our tansies at Easter have reference to the bitter herbs ; though at the same time, it was always the fashion for a man to have a gammon of bacon to show himself to be no Jew."

We have it (on perhaps somewhat doubtful authority) that the most ingenious method



of fasting is that recorded in the "*Mappe-monde Papistique*," wherein it appears that a Venetian saint had certain boxes made like mass books, and these book-boxes were filled, some with Malmsey wine, and some with the fleshiest parts of capons and partridges. These were supposed to be books of devotion, and the saint is said to have lived long and grown fat on them.

A peculiarly villainous form of torture was invented by Galeazzo Visconti (1355), which was known as Galeazzo's Lent, because it was guaranteed to prolong the life of the unfortunate victim for forty days. This seems to have been one of the few traits of inherited family cruelty in a man who otherwise was a sort of Mæcenæ of his time. He was a friend and patron of Petrarch, founded, under his direction, the University of Pavia, and brought together a considerable library.

According to Walsh, it is not generally known that the use of flesh, meat, eggs, and milk during Lent was forbidden in England, not only by ecclesiastical but also by statute law, even into the time of William III. Any



violation of the law was followed by dire penalties. There is the case of the landlady of the Rose Tavern, St. Catherine's Tower, London, in whose house during the Lent of 1563 was found a quantity of raw and cooked meat. She and four other women who were proved to have partaken of the forbidden viands were put in the stocks all night. In 1570 was passed a statute making the penalties for violating the Lenten laws sixty shillings and three months imprisonment.

Finally, as an apposite curiosity, I will quote a curious dispensation granted two hundred and seventy-six years ago and formally recorded in the parish register of Wakefield.

"To all people to whom these presents shall come, James Lister, Vicar of Wakefield, and preacher of God's word, sendeth greeting : Whereas Alice Lister wife of Richard Lister Clerke who now soiourneth with her sonne Willm Paulden of Wakefield, by reason of her old age & many years & state, and long-contynued sickness is become so weake, and her stomach so



colde, not able to digest colde meates and fish, who by the counsell of Physicions is advised to abstaine from and to forbear the eateng of all manner of fruits, fish and milk meates : Know yee therefoor for the causes aforesaide and for the better strengthening & recovery of her health, I the saide James Lister do hereby give & grant libertie and licence to her the saide Alice Lister att her will and pleasure att all tymes, as well during the tyme of Lent, as upon other fasting daies and fish daies (exhibiting by the laws to eate flesh) to dresse and eate such kind of fleshe as shal be best agreing to her stomach & weake appetite. In witnes hereof I the saide James Lister have hereunto sett my hand the eight day of ffebruary in the sixt year of the Reine of our Soveraigne Lord Charles by the Grace of God King of England Scotland ffrance and Ireland Defender of the Faith &c and in the yeare of our Lord god 1630 James Lister."







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	Fumigation
	Deacidification    spray - PDA
	Lamination
	Solvents
	Leather Treatment
	Adhesives
	Remarks



